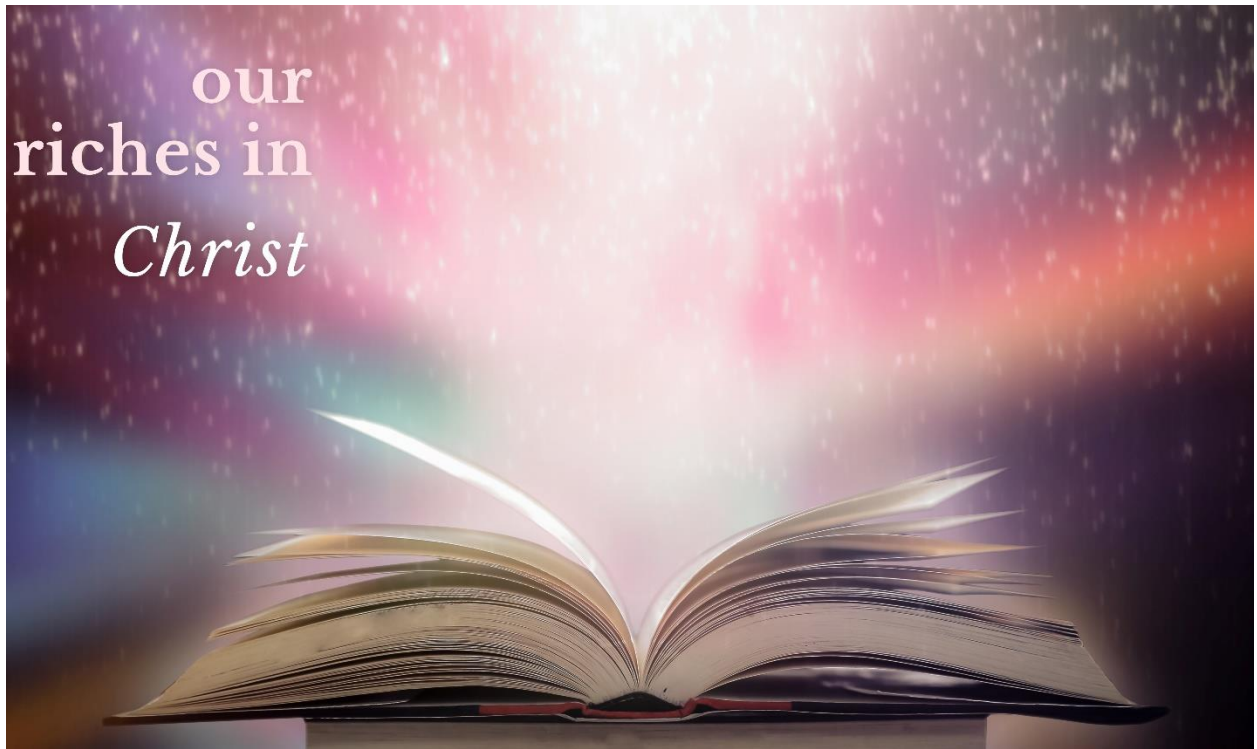


our
riches in
Christ



A WONDERFUL DAY IN THE LORD
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January 3, 2022

We are starting a new year! The last two years have been hard years for many of us, and probably for most of the world. We don't know where 2022 will take us, but we hope it is a little easier for all of us, but it may not be.

We have talked about a lot of things over the last two years on these broadcasts. Many of you have followed along and we very much appreciate that and trust it has been helpful to you. As I was thinking about starting a new year with all of you, I asked myself, "If I could come to your house every morning for just five minutes, and have a cup of coffee, and have a personal time to talk about the Lord with you what would I want to talk about?" It would be a wonderful privilege for me to be able to do that with each of you individually, but that is not feasible, so this format is, in a sense, a way for me to sit down and talk about Christ with each of you in the comfort of your home, office, or even your car. As I pondered this question, I thought that I would like to talk to you about just how rich we are in Christ.

The topic of our riches in Christ is very important in the New Testament, but it is often neglected. We talk about the things we ought to do for the Lord. We talk about what He has done for us. We talk about obligations. We talk about obedience. We talk about all sorts of things that are very important to the Christian life, but I think many times we simply don't know who we are in Christ. We don't know our riches, or the treasures, which are ours in the Lord Jesus. If we don't know who we are, then we are not likely to live out the life that we should live out.

Further, we find in Scripture that what the Lord has done for us is free us from the bondage of death and sin and the devil and unless we know that and understand what He has done to free us from those things we usually go in the wrong directions in trying to solve our problems in dealing with those kinds of things. I think it is so very important that we know who we are in Christ. Some people call this their position in Christ. Others might speak of their treasures or their riches in Christ. I like both of those approaches. Especially the one about riches. We find in the book of Ephesians that Paul begins his great epistle in the first three chapters talking about how rich we are in Christ. I'd like to think about that with you for a moment.

In Ephesians 1:7, it talks about the fact we are rich in His grace. It says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." Then we look at Ephesians 1:18, which says, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, that are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Think about that. An inheritance. When we think of inheritance, we think about a loved one passing away and leaving a will. We open the will and find out what our inheritance is. Here, we open the Word of God and find the glory of His inheritance that He has left for His saints. Those are the riches we have.

In Ephesians 2:7 it talks about the riches of His mercy. It says, "so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." The riches of His grace, His mercies are talked about here.

Ephesians 3:8 says, "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ." Paul is saying that we cannot get to the depths of these riches. The storehouses are so full of the riches of Christ, for us, that we could never plummet those depths. They are unfathomable.

The final mention in the first three chapters of riches is found in Ephesian 3:16. This is a long prayer, so I'll begin with Ephesians 3:14, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His spirit in the inner man." He speaks here of the riches of His glory, then he moves immediately to referencing the power of God in our lives. Remember this is a prayer of what Paul wants us to understand as the Holy Spirit gave him wisdom.

To recap, some of the riches that are identified for us in Ephesians 1-3 are:

1. Riches of His grace. (Eph. 1:7)
2. Riches of His mercy. (Eph. 2:7)
3. Riches of unfathomable proportions. (Eph. 3:8)
4. Riches of His glory. (Eph. 3:16)

We will pick that up next time and look at these particular verses and this prayer and the riches of His glory and His power.

January 4, 2022

Yesterday we began a new series. We are looking at our riches that we have in Christ, or our position in Christ. We are looking at who we are because we are believers in the Lord Jesus. The New Testament floods us with information along that line. We could outline, to some degree, perhaps a whole New Testament, especially the epistles, around this issue of who we are in Christ and what He has done for us and our riches in Him. I'm not sure how long we will look at this together, but I think this is going to be a very rich study.

Yesterday we looked at some of the riches that are identified for us in Ephesians 1-3:

1. Riches of His grace. (Eph. 1:7)
2. Riches of His mercy. (Eph. 2:7)
3. Riches of unfathomable proportions. (Eph. 3:8)
4. Riches of His glory. (Eph. 3:16)

We are looking at the fifth of the riches that Paul identifies. I want to spend a little extra time on this one. He is just getting ready to go into Ephesians 4 into what we might call the applicational section of this epistle. In Ephesians 1-3 he told us who we are. He tells us about our riches and doesn't tell us to do anything, he simply says this is who we are in Christ. Then in Ephesians 4 he begins to apply all that he has taught us in relationship to how we should live for the Lord.

In Ephesians 3:14 he begins this very valuable prayer. This is one of the most wonderful prayers you will find anywhere in Scripture. It says, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name," so we see here he is praying. He is praying for the Ephesians, and by extension he is praying for us as well.

The prayer continues in Ephesians 3:16, "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man." So, his prayer here is according to His riches, out of the abundance of the riches that are in Christ, the unfathomable riches that he talks about in Ephesians 3:8.

Paul then moves on to the issue of power. The Christian life is not a self-help program. The Lord does not come alongside to "help" us, perhaps He helps us in certain ways, but He doesn't come alongside to help us. Rather, He comes alongside to empower, save, and deliver us, and He does that through the riches of His glory. We find that He is going to strengthen us with power so that we have the ability to live the life that no one can live on their own. The Lord does not call on us to step up and do all these wonderful things to help us grow and mature. He tells us things we should do, and we will get to those things in Ephesians 4, but you do them not through your own power, but with the energy and power that is in Christ. The reason Paul is praying about this is that most of

us don't really grasp that. We don't quite comprehend the necessity of His power for us to live and how much we need it. So, Paul is praying that we understand that, and that we be strengthened with that power specifically.

Ephesians 3:17-19 finishes the prayer saying, "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." What a full few verses of Scripture; let us break them down quickly. He wants us to know in our hearts, our "inner man," through the strengthening power of God that Christ dwells in us. The word "dwell" means tabernacle. It means to live there in us, to be comfortable in us. Christ lives in us. "Dwelling" here, is not speaking about the new entering or an initial entering, if we are saved, He lives in us already, so instead it is saying that He might be "at home" within us. As the verses continue it says that we would be firmly "grounded in love." Our whole life is to be based on the love of Christ that we might, "be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ." So, his prayer is that through His strengthening power we could know how much Christ loves us. Paul says here "which surpasses knowledge." You and I will never understand fully how much Christ loves us. Ephesians 3:19 ends saying, "that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." So, He not only lives within us, but He guides us and controls us. He gives us the strength and the energy to be what God wants us to be.

This is a magnificent prayer that we understand that this is who we are in Christ, and that these riches of His glory are what is being talked about. It is ours, and we have these riches within ourselves that enable us to live for Him.

As I sit here and talk to you about that today, I want you to clearly understand something as we start this series: if you are a believer, Christ's power is in you so that you might live as He wants you to live.

To recap, the five riches of Christ in Ephesians 1-3 that we have looked at are:

1. Riches of His grace. (Eph. 1:7)
2. Riches of His mercy. (Eph. 2:7)
3. Riches of unfathomable proportions. (Eph. 3:8)
4. Riches of His glory. (Eph. 3:16)
5. Riches of Christ dwelling in you. (Eph. 3:17)

We trust that will give you a wonderful day in the Lord and we will look at some more of these things next time.

January 5, 2022

Welcome once again to our Wonderful Day in the Lord broadcast. I trust you are inviting me into your home, car or office and taking just a few minutes to open the Word of God with me. We are looking at the great riches we have in Christ. As I think about some of those riches, we are still looking at the book of Ephesians as it is so full of this subject. I'd like to look at Ephesians 1:4, at one of the great riches that are ours in Christ.

Ephesians 1:4 says, "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him." This is a verse some people shy away from because they don't quite comprehend what it is saying, and we understand that. These verses are very intense and heavy, but they are also very important. What we find here is that He chose us. I don't know a lot of you that are watching or listening on a personal basis, but some of you may have come from backgrounds where you were unwanted. I know of children who have been unwanted by their parents and grew up in that type of environment. There are people that have been abused, neglected, or harmed in many ways. There are people who have gone to school or work and been rejected by most of their peers and have grown up lonely and unwanted. Then later in life, this haunts them as they begin to question if anyone loves them or wants them. They wonder if everyone rejects them, and they feel very concerned about that. Some act out in anger because they feel rejected and unloved. They turn against the world and people. These are people that do great harm and damage in our society sometimes. They are angry people, and they are angry because they feel unloved and neglected and no one has ever wanted them, and they are going to teach some people some lessons. These are the kinds of things that many people have grown up with and you may be one of those people. Perhaps you have never known the love and acceptance of other people in a way that really meant a lot to you. I don't know. Now, even if you have known a better background, it is amazing to look at a verse like this and realize that no matter what our background has been, no matter how difficult life might have been for you, or how unwanted or unloved you may feel right at this moment, you have the most important being in the whole universe that reached out and in eternity past and chose you! He chose YOU! He hand-picked you for Himself from the foundation of the earth! Why would He do that? On what basis?

As we look further at this verse, we find that He had a plan for us. He says that He not only chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, but He chose us to be, "holy and blameless." That means He has set us apart from all the ugliness, hatefulness, and darkness of sin. This world is enveloped in sin. We are born in sin. We are born dead, spiritually speaking. We are the children of the devil. The devil is our true spiritual father before we come to Christ. There is so much more we could say along that line, but we find that as we talk about this envelope of sin, this environment of sin within us and outside of us, is doing great harm to us. Sin destroys, sin deceives, and sin leaves us in agony on so many levels. That's precisely where we were when Christ chose us, but He chose us to be, "holy and blameless." That means to be set apart for Him. Set apart to

live for Him. Blameless? None of us live a totally blameless life, but we have been brought out of this realm of darkness and brought into His realm and Kingdom of Light, and therefore we are blameless because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. He has called us. He has a plan for us. It is a plan that involves holiness and blamelessness. We have been set apart from that which used to control us both outwardly and inwardly.

The verse goes on to say that we do all of this, "before Him in love." We must look back again to having been chosen. He chose us in love, and He loves us. I don't know who loves you in this world, maybe nobody, but I hope that is not the case. Further, I do know that the one who matters most loves you supremely and has saved you from your sin and chose you for Himself. He has set you apart for Himself.

What a thought to think that God looks upon you and He says, "You are mine!" Even a step further than that, not only are you His, but what a thought to think that the supreme being of the universe, the God over all things, has picked you out for Himself. He says, "You are loved." My friends, as we think about who we are in this world, I want you to know that no matter what your circumstances might be, if you belong to Jesus Christ, you are His and you are loved, and you have been hand-picked by the God of the universe to place His love on you.

What a wonderful day in the Lord that ought to give us today.

January 6, 2022

If you have your Bible, turn to Romans 3. We are looking at our riches in Christ and the many treasures that are ours and we are going to look today at one of the very foundational riches in Christ.

Who are we as believers in Christ?

I am looking first at bad news then we will turn to good news. The bad news is found in Romans 3:9. It is very bad news. Just reading these verses can very much depress you when you realize your natural state coming into this world and your life before Christ and what that description looks like as given here. So, look at this with me.

Romans 3:9 says, "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin." The Scripture never shies away from this sin word. Today people often do because they don't want to talk about sin. What did he mean by sin? Listen to this very negative description of those who do not know Christ, or our natural state, as Romans 3:10-18 says,

**"as it is written,
'THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.'
'THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,' 'THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS'; WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITERNESS'; 'THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.' 'THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.'"**

Isn't that a depressing thought? No one does good as far as God is concerned. We can do benevolent things in this world, but a goodness that reaches the standard of God, nobody achieves! Then it goes down to the way they speak in Romans 3:13. James 2 tells us our tongue is a fire. It is a world of iniquity. We say things we shouldn't say. We say things we don't always mean. We say things that hurt people. Our mouths which are a window to our hearts reveal what is really going on down in our hearts. We are people whose lips betray us. In Romans 3:15 we see a picture of violence. We realize that not everybody is violent as far as going out and harming people, but it is in our hearts. That is why Jesus talks about in the Sermon on the Mount. He said that even if you are angry, it is like murder, you just haven't physically murdered someone, but in the heart, it is in there. We have cultured, guarded, and protected our hearts so people don't see what we are really like, and we have learned how to not act out on most of that stuff, but it is there, and the Scriptures identify that.

Romans 3:18 tells us that a relatively moral person in our world does not have the fear of God before them. They are not living for God. God is a non-entity in their life. He doesn't compute, as far as how they live life. They may not see themselves as being belligerent against God or even denying God, even though of course many people do, but most people are just decent citizens, good neighbors, but they do not fear God and live before God. God is not the controlling entity in their lives and therefore they live the way they want to live. That's the way people live. They live and act out the way they want. This is a description of the sinful nature of humanity summarized in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This is a very concise statement that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, therefore we are, by nature and by right, under the judgment of God. That is what we deserve because we have rejected Him and because we have lived out our sinful life.

Here is the good news! The good news is even better than the bad news is bad. Looking at Romans 3:24, it says, "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Justified, declared righteous, is what that means. So, God takes us, who are sinners, and He gives us a gift of grace through the redemption which is in Christ. Christ has purchased us out of this sinful state. He has purchased us through His own blood by dying for us on the cross so that we might be declared righteous. This does not mean we live perfect or sinless lives. It does not mean that we are righteous and sinless, but we have been declared righteous. The Lord has said that we are no longer guilty of our sin, He has forgiven our sin and our sin has been wiped out.

I will talk about that more next time because forgiveness is one of the greatest of all riches that are ours in Christ. Today, I trust that knowing that you have been declared righteous by God has given you a wonderful day in the Lord.

January 7, 2022

As we conclude our first week of the new year on our Wonderful Day in the Lord broadcast, I hope you are enjoying our new series on Our Riches in Christ. We have looked at a number of those already. Today I want to look at the wonderful riches of being forgiven. Most of us look at our own lives, especially after what we saw yesterday concerning the biblical description of our nature and who we are before Christ with the description wreaking of sin telling us we are people in the darkness of sin, and we rightly question if we deserve to be forgiven. We may not feel forgiven at all. The answer to if we deserve to be forgiven is: NO! Neither you nor I deserve to be forgiven. We have done nothing that merits being forgiven, and we don't feel forgiven even if we are forgiven, even on a human level. When we have sinned or hurt someone, and they have forgiven us; we may not feel that they have forgiven us. When it comes to God, it is not unusual for many true believers to carry about this heavy load of guilt and doubt, wondering if God truly has forgiven them. We know we have gone through the motions and asked the Lord to forgive us, we have prayed prayers and pleaded with Him, but we still don't feel forgiven and so it often is a great burden for us. One of the great riches that we can find in the Lord is the very fact that we have been forgiven if we have come to Jesus Christ by faith alone for forgiveness.

The prodigal son probably felt that way. You remember one of the most famous stories in Scripture where the prodigal son has left home, taken his inheritance, and wasted it on lousy living. When he is at the very end of himself, he decides he should go home. We pick up his story in Luke 15:18-20, which says, "I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" So, he got up and came to his father." Then going to Luke 15:21, it says, "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'" So, the prodigal son needed forgiveness and so he turns back home and goes to his father, but he doesn't really expect forgiveness. He is hoping his father will take him in and give him a job on the farm. At least he can eat and have a roof over his head. That is pretty much all he expected from his father.

But let's look at what the father did. Back up to Luke 15:20, "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him." That is something that an adult man of this man's stature would have never done in that society. They did not run. It was undignified. They certainly didn't run like this and wrap their arms around their son and kiss them in this way, but he did, and it is showing the love that he had.

Later his elder son questioned all of this. He did not like what his father had done, but in Luke 15:32, the father says to his elder son, "But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found." There is the attitude of the father toward his wayward son. He did not make him a

servant. He didn't simply give him a place to eat and sleep and food. He loved him. He restored him to his former position within the family.

This is all a picture of how God loves us. God desires deeply our repentance, and our turning to Him by faith. He is more than willing to forgive our sins and put us in His family. When He does that, we find that there is true forgiveness. It says in Psalm 32:1, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; Whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!" True blessedness, true riches, true privileges and true favor is found in the one whose sins have been totally forgiven.

How totally have they been forgiven? I think of Psalm 103:12, it says, "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us." That is a metaphor. It is a picture. You cannot get any further than the east is from the west. Those transgressions, those sins, those issues in which we have offended a holy God have been taken by our Lord and they are gone. You can never find them again. We have been truly, and totally, and completely forgiven.

Forgiveness, that is one of the riches we have in Christ. Only those who have been redeemed and know Christ as their Savior can have these riches. As we end our first week together, I trust that we do so on this very high note, that you and I, if we know Christ, have had every one of our sins, past, present, and future forgiven. They are gone, and they will never be brought up again. We are beloved and loved by the Father and our sins are no more. That gives us all the joys possible in Christ.

January 10, 2022

We are working through the theme right now of "Our Riches in Christ." These are the treasures that we have in the Lord Jesus, or privileges, if you prefer to call them that. This week, we are looking at five more of these wonderful riches that are ours. These are things we have only because we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Today we are going to talk about the presence of God. We know that the Lord is everywhere, He is omnipresent. He is everywhere, at all times. We know that. If we had the capability to look around us and see all the things that are invisible to our eyes, I think it would scare us to death. Sometimes as I sit in my house as I look through a sunbeam coming through a window, I see all the dust particles that are there, and I say to myself, how do we even live? How can we breathe with all these dust particles that normally I do not see at all? Only if you have the right light can you see those kinds of things. It's kind of astounding. How many more things are like that? Things that are totally invisible to our eyes.

If we think about the spiritual realm, we know that the angels and demonic powers live in the heavenly places, and somehow, they are around us in an invisible sense. We do not know how that works. I think if we could see that, we would be petrified.

Then, of course, there is God. The Lord Himself is everywhere, yet He is invisible to us, we don't see Him, and yet we find in the Scriptures that He is always with us, and we, as Christians, can enjoy His presence.

The fact that He is everywhere means that all people, whether they are believers or not, are living in the presence of God. Scripture tells us that because we are His we have a very specialized form of His presence. As Christians, according to the Bible, the Holy Spirit lives in us. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tells us, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body." The Legacy Standard Translation translates this word "temple" as "sanctuary". Sanctuary is a better translation because in the Jewish temple it was a very large building with many compartments, but the sanctuary was where the presence of God dwelled. That is what it is saying here. We are the very sanctuary of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in us if we are His.

One of the things that are floating around us is radio waves. If we could see them, there are all sorts of these waves going through the air, but we don't see them, and we can't see them unless we have a radio or some other device that picks up on the radio waves. They are still there, but we don't have the mechanism to pick up on those unless we have the radio turned on. There is a sense that we might say that Jesus is the "channel" to God. The transmissions are going forth and that "channel" is through Jesus as the Holy Spirit indwells us, and in that sense, a whole deity is within us. What an amazing thing

to consider, that you and I are the sanctuary of God. What a privilege to even consider that He would bother to do that in our lives. It is a joy. It is a privilege. It is a richness that is ours. As a result of that, He says in 1 Corinthians 6:20, "you have been bought with a price," that is the takeaway and application, "therefore glorify God in your body." If the Holy Spirit indwells us and we have the presence of God within us, then the takeaway is to glorify Him with the body that He has given us as His people.

This gives us a wonderful day in the Lord as we consider what He has done for us: in granting His presence in a very localized and specialized sense in the lives of His people. We will pick up on our access to God next time.

January 11, 2022

In our last broadcast we were looking at one of our riches in Christ and that was that He is with us. He lives in us, and we have His presence in a very localized and different sense than the world does. We know He is everywhere at once, He is omnipresent, but He lives within us, He dwells within us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. What a privilege that is. Even to contemplate the idea that we carry around God in our bodies is mind blowing. It is a privilege and one of our great riches.

Along with that we have our privilege of our access to God. The truth that He lives in us gives us the privilege of communicating with Him. We are looking at Hebrews today. Some of you might have a desire to meet with a celebrity or very famous person. Maybe you would love to have an audience with a politician, or maybe not. Perhaps it's a singer or a movie star or if you are more spiritual it may be a preacher or a bible teacher or someone that has meant a lot to you in your spiritual pilgrimage, and you would love to have a sit down with them. You would love an opportunity to ask questions of them. I remember when I was going to bible college Warren Wiersbe was speaking that week and he set up a block of time in the afternoons to have interviews with anyone who would want to come talk to him. I set up a time to go see him, and I sat down and talked with him for about fifteen minutes asking him question about his life and his disciplines as a pastor. I thought that was a great privilege. Now, if that was a great privilege, think of what the great privilege of knowing Jesus Christ and being able to communicate and having access to Him is!

The book of Hebrews comes to mind on this topic because this is a book of Scripture that is constantly inviting us to draw near to God and to have access to Him in a way that no other book of Scripture does. It is a wonderful reminder to us. In Hebrews 4:14-16 it says, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." We have looked at this passage before for various things. I want to look at this again and this time I want to look at the fact that we are invited to draw near to God. He is already everywhere, being omnipresent, and He lives within us according to what we looked at in Scripture yesterday, but He calls us to draw near to the throne of grace. That is a particular act of communication. It is an opportunity for us to pray to Almighty God and to have that kind of access to Him. There we find mercy and grace at our time of greatest need.

The reason this is possible is because in Hebrews 7:27 we have a ministry of Jesus Christ on our behalf. It says starting in Hebrews 7:25, "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Once again, we have the invitation to draw near to God. This time, He is talking

about our salvation in Jesus Christ. He is able "to save forever those who draw near to God." Why are we allowed to draw near to God? Because we come to God through Christ and, "He always lives to make intercession for them." Therefore, if we were going to have access to God, we could never come into that presence of God. We could never really draw near unless we had someone who interceded for us. Scripture says that someone is Jesus Christ. He forever lives, He never dies, and He never goes away. He intercedes for us so that we have access to God. That, especially in this verse, references our salvation. We draw near to God for our forgiveness of sin, for our salvation because of Jesus Christ our intercessor.

This is a privilege that is unimaginable, and I trust that this gives you a wonderful day in the Lord as you contemplate what the Lord has done for you in Jesus Christ.

January 12, 2022

As we continue looking at our Riches in Christ, one of those immense privileges in Christ is that we are in the family of God. We belong to Him in two ways: we are His children by birth, and we are adopted.

First, we are His children by birth. In John 1:12 it says this, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." As we read that verse of Scripture, we find that we become the children of God when we receive Him and believe in His name. That is the moment of conversion, the moment of salvation. Until then, we are not in the family of God. According to Scripture, we are actually in the family of Satan, and he is our father, but now we are in the family of God.

Second, we are in His family by adoption. Romans 8:15 talks about the adoption into the family of God and says, "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" It speaks here about being adopted into the family of God so that we are His sons. This speaks of both men and women, and we cry out "Abba! Father!" which is a term of endearment. He is now our Father, not just in a theological sense, or generic sense, but He is our personal Father. We are endeared to Him. We have a family relationship with Almighty God because He has adopted us into His family.

In the Roman system at the time, adoption was a little different than we have today. People could adopt children, relatives, or even adults into their own family. Octavian was adopted by Julius Caesar. He was a relative, but he was not his son, and he would go on to become emperor. That was something that the Romans often did. What happened at that moment of adoption was the past of that individual was erased. Their family identity from the past was gone. They now had a new family and a new identity. If they had financial debts, those were expunged. It was a pretty good deal, wasn't it? Those debts were erased. If they were in trouble with the law, then they are no longer in trouble with the law because they are a new person and there is no record against them. All their past has been erased and a new identity has begun. A new life has begun. That was what happened in the Roman adoption system.

When Paul picks up that term and talks about us being adopted into the family of God, he is using that as a bit of a metaphor for what is happening to us spiritually speaking. As Paul talks about here, we now have been adopted into His family. That means our debt of sin is gone. Our past sins have been forgiven, they have been expunged, there is no record of our sins any longer, in that sense, because Jesus Christ has paid that price and we are no longer under condemnation. The law itself was once against us, but that is no longer the case. We are now in Christ and the law has been fulfilled by Christ.

Beyond that, we have a new identity. Scripture speaks of us being new creatures in Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:17 saying, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." That is not simply a metaphor, or an illustration, it is the truth. We are new. We have a new nature. We are new creatures. We have a new identity. We were once the sons of the devil and now we are the sons of God. We were once sinners and now we are saints who sin. We still sin. We still battle with that, but our basic identity is that of saints. We are the sons, the children of God. What a privilege and rich treasure that is when we realize that we, who deserve nothing and we who were at one point totally in defiance against God, have now been adopted into His family, and we are the children of God, the sons of God, with all the privileges that go with being the sons of the Almighty King of the universe.

If that doesn't give you a wonderful day in the Lord, I don't know what will. You do need to know Jesus Christ as your Savior as John 1:12 says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." If you have not done that yet, I want to really encourage you today to take that step. Trust Him and believe in Him that He may save you from your sins and you may become a child of God.

January 13, 2022

In the last broadcast we looked at one of the great privileges that we have in Christ and that is that we are in the family of God. If we are Christians and have received Jesus Christ as our Savior and believed in Him according to John 1:12, we are the very children of God. In Romans we saw that as Christians we have been adopted into the family of God and therefore, we are His legitimate grown-up children with all the privileges that an adult child would have, as was true in the Roman system of adoption. That is true of the Christian as well. We are full grown children in the family of God.

There is a secondary part of that treasure we have in the family of God. We also have a family of others who have been saved by the Lord Jesus. So, we are in the family of God, but in that family, we have siblings, we might say. So, that is another wonderful privilege of ours that we have as we will see in 1 John 3.

As we think about how we need the family of God, we first find that we have a Father, a heavenly Father. It says in 1 John 3:1, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." This verse tells us that being in the family of God means that we have a Father. That Father, of course, is God Himself. He says here that this is a great love to be called the children of God. The world doesn't understand that, or accept that, and they do not accept us in that sense because the world does not accept Him. It doesn't understand what God has done for us.

It goes on to talk about God as our Father. Scripture speaks of Jesus being our brother in some sense and Jesus while He was on earth spoke of those who believed in Him and accepted His Word as His brothers and sisters and so we accept that. In 1 John 3:10 it says, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." In the family of God, we have a family of other believers, spiritual siblings. There is a natural love that 1 John talks about between the brothers and sisters in Christ. So powerful is that natural love, that spiritual love because we are all in Christ, that he goes on in this passage of Scripture to say that if you don't have that kind of love for one another and if you hate one another, then it is evidence that you don't know Him at all. That is a sobering concept, isn't it? If you look at 1 John 3:11 he says, "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." He is saying this because it is not always easy to love one another. Just like in a real family, it is not always easy to love our brothers and sisters, so it is not always easy to love the children of God who are in our spiritual family. 1 John 3:14 says further, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death." This is strong language, isn't it? He is saying that we know it isn't always easy to love one another and we know we rub each other the wrong way sometimes, but he says there is a natural draw and natural love for one another who are in the family of God, and even though we may not always like one another, or we may

not always get along with one another, there is that love for one another because we are in the family. He says, "We know we passed out of death into life because we love the brothers." That presupposes the brothers are sometimes difficult to love. It is easy to love a little precious baby. However, to love someone that rubs us the wrong way is tough. We know we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers, and so we have this natural love within the body of Christ for one another in that family.

So, one of our privileges is not only to be in the family of God of which we are adopted into, but also, we have a family of others who have joined us in that family that we can love and minister with, to be part of our lives, and fellowship with. Those are privileges that are beyond explanation and understanding.

January 14, 2022

As we conclude this week talking about Our Riches in Christ, and all the treasures that are ours in Him, we are looking at power today. We have been given the empowerment to do several things as a Christian.

Sometimes I am asked what is the difference between living the Christian life under the power of the Holy Spirit, under the power of God, verses self-discipline? The answer to that is that all those self-disciplines can accomplish many things, but there are certain things it cannot accomplish. The Lord calls on us to do things, discipline ourselves, obey and so forth, but without His enablement, we are incapable of doing the things that matter spiritually.

I am going to discuss three things concerning the power the Lord gives us:

1. The Power of Evangelism

Acts 1:8 says, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." The twelve apostles, and those that ministered with them, could not really go out and do anything of significance, spiritually speaking, they could not bring people to Christ without the enablement and power of the Holy Spirit. So, they were instructed to wait until that power came. When that power came, the Lord did wonderful things to the ministries of these apostles and others.

2. The Power of Salvation

You cannot save yourself and without the power of the gospel you are hopelessly lost. Two very important passages on this are in Romans and 1 Corinthians. Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel. He said he would not pull back from explaining and giving out the gospel. It is the only power available for salvation. So, he is far from ashamed of it because of its power. In 1 Corinthians 1:18, something very similar is said, "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." When you get out the gospel and tell unsaved people how they can come to God and be saved, don't be surprised if they see that as silliness and foolishness and a myth because that is how the unbeliever processes the gospel. When the power of God is present to open the eyes and hearts of people, they see the gospel for what it really is. What is it? It is the power of God for salvation. Without the power of God, without the enablement of the Lord, none of us could ever possibly be saved. Christianity is not a self-help course; it is a deliverance. It is not *you do a little and God does a little*. It is the Lord who rescues us from our own sinfulness and our own spiritual death.

3. The power to live the Christian life

We know we can't save ourselves, but can we sanctify ourselves and grow through our own discipline on our own good works and efforts? Not according to Scripture. We need the power of God to enable us to grow in Him. In Ephesians 1:19 it says, "and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might." Without the work of His strength and His might, you and I would never progress in the Christian life. We would simply be spiritual babies forever. In Ephesians 3:16 it says, "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man." In Ephesians 1 he is talking about us recognizing and understanding this power. Now in Ephesians 3 he is praying that we would have this power to live the life "through the Spirit in the inner man." So, this energizing and strengthening that comes only through the Holy Spirit to enable us to walk with the Lord is absolutely essential to the Christian life.

One of the great privileges we have, one of our great riches, is that we are not called to live the Christian life on our own. The Christian life is impossible to live through our own efforts. We need the enablement and power of God through the Holy Spirit to live the life that God has called us to live, and He has given us that power. It is available to us, and we need to tap into that because He has given it as one of the great treasures that are ours.

We hope looking at some of our riches and privileges in Christ this week has been a blessing. We trust you have a wonderful day in the Lord throughout this whole weekend.

January 17, 2022

We have been working through the subject of the riches we have in Christ over the last few weeks. We are going to continue looking at more riches that are ours this week. There is so much in the Word of God that tell of our blessings in Him. It is good to be reminded of that once in a while. A lot of times people tend to gravitate toward the difficult things in life and maybe get despondent over the difficult things we are facing and such and we tend to forget the blessings and riches and treasures that are ours in Christ. The New Testament doesn't forget that, and it is constantly reminding us of who we are in Jesus Christ. It is so helpful in our own lives.

The first is in 1 Peter 2:9. This is one of my favorite verses in Scripture. It says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Then in 1 Peter 2:10 it continues, "for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." This is a beautiful passage of Scripture. Last week, in our Wednesday night service, we had a missionary from Mongolia, whom we have supported for twenty-nine years, speaking about the fact that the Lord is at work calling out people for Himself. That is primarily what He is doing. He is calling out a people from every tribe, tongue, and nation as a people for Himself, and this passage of Scripture speaks of that very clearly. What a teaching here! We are a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. We belong to God. We are the possession of Almighty God. What a thought that is!

I have some things in my possession at home that I might call trinkets. I have a small suitcase of things, and I have a little box with some really small trinkets that have meant something to me over my lifetime. These are things that go back to my youth, my high school days, or whatever, and they remind me of things that are very special to me. These things belong to me, and on rare occasions, I will look at those things and be reminded of some special memories. Now, when I am gone, my boys won't care less about those trinkets or those memories because they don't have those memories. Those things don't belong to them, and therefore they really don't care about them. So, when I am gone, they will probably just throw them into a garbage can somewhere. If they were to keep them, they would have no value to them at all because they mean nothing to them. Now to think that we are special to God because we belong to Him reminds us how blessed we are to even think that we could actually belong to the Lord Himself.

Then it goes on in that same verse, one of the great applications and implications of the fact that we belong to God, is that we have a very unique and specialized ministry and opportunity. He goes on to say in 1 Peter 2:9, "so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." So, because we belong to Him and we are His family, His people, He has called us out and we have a privilege of being able to "proclaim the excellencies of Christ." No one can do that unless

they belong to the Lord. The fact that we belong to Him, and we are His possession, and He has called us out and gave us this wonderful relationship and wonderful privilege to be part of His family; we have the opportunity to tell others of the greatness and the excellences of Christ. One reason this is one of my favorite verses is because of the way it says that. Other Scriptures talk about how we can tell other people about Christ and give the gospel and many other wonderful things, but to say it this way is special to me: "to proclaim the excellences of Him." The excellences of Jesus Christ we get to proclaim to other people. That is because He has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you have been drawn out of spiritual darkness and into spiritual light, we must proclaim concerning the greatness of Christ and His excellences and what He has done for us.

One of the things we are talking about this week as far as our treasures and our riches in Christ is the very fact that we belong to Jesus Christ, and we have the privilege of proclaiming His excellencies to others. I don't know about you, but that will give me a wonderful day in the Lord for a long time.

January 18, 2022

Looking at the riches we have in Jesus Christ is encouraging and I think it is helpful in helping us realize how much we do have. Last time we looked at the privilege of belonging to God. He is ours and we can proclaim His excellencies.

Today we are looking at Ephesians 1 and I'd like to note that we have been blessed in very special ways. We start off with Ephesians 1:3 which says, "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Most of us are probably on many occasions asking God for more blessings. I once challenged our church to spend a whole week in their prayer life never once using the word "bless." Such as Lord bless me, or Lord bless so and so. A lot of people came back and said it was hard not to use the word bless in relationship to prayer. When we come to this verse, it kind of convicts us that we have already been blessed, according to verse 3, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He is talking about spiritual blessings here. He is not talking about physical blessings per se. He says every spiritual blessing possible in Christ Jesus has already been given to us. So, we are a highly blessed people. We are highly rich, very, very rich in spiritual things because of Christ Jesus. The phrase that says, "in Christ," is a very unique and special phrase in the New Testament. It is found over one hundred times and we find that all of our blessings are "in Christ." To be "in Christ," is how we are blessed.

He goes on in this passage of Scripture to give us some specific ways of which we have been blessed in Christ. In Ephesians 1:4 it says, "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love..." We have been hand-picked and chosen by God to be His and we have been given the privilege of being holy and blameless before Him and loved. Then it goes on to say, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." We looked at this recently. He has adopted us into the family of God so that we have all the privileges of a full-grown son in Christ.

In Ephesians 1:6 it says, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." This is the grace. Then Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." There is a lot in that verse. Redemption, we have been set free and brought out of the bondage of sin, and that happened through His blood. Part of that redemption process involves forgiveness. We have been forgiven from our sins and set free from them and it is all according to His riches and His grace. We are talking about riches, correct? We find that these riches are found in His grace.

Then it goes on to say in Ephesians 1:8, "which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight," so, these are overflowing, and He calls that to happen because of His infinite wisdom and insight. Continuing in Ephesians 1:9, "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him." He goes on to talk

about that in Ephesians 1:10 as well. In other words, we are privileged to know His will. We are privileged to know the purpose of God in this universe and to some extent to know His future plans for this universe as well as what He has already done.

Looking at Ephesians 1:11, “also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.” He is working in our lives according to the counsel of His will. In Ephesians 1:13, it says, “In Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Again, we looked at the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is God’s mark on our lives approving the authenticity of who we are. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit so that we are truly authentic believers in Christ, and nothing can shake that seal from our lives.

Ephesians 1:14 says, “who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.” The Holy Spirit is not only the mark of the fact that we are in Christ, but He is also the pledge of our inheritance. It is a promise of God that nothing could ever shake us from His love.

All these blessings are ours. He says that “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” are ours, then he ticks off a number of those wonderful blessings. There are many, many others in the Scriptures and we will be looking at some of those in broadcasts to come. Here specifically, he lays down for us many of those blessings. What a blessing that is. I hope it blesses your life today.

January 19, 2022

Today we look at another of our great riches in Christ. First, we are going to start with Christ Himself. Here is the treasure we are going to look at today: the fact that we are seated at the right hand of God. To get there, we must do a little bit of putting some pieces together.

Starting with Ephesians 1:20, this is a teaching in the New Testament that perhaps some people haven't gathered or paid attention to, but it says, "which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places." Historically, what we are looking at here, is that Jesus Christ came to earth and lived as a man on this planet. He went to the cross and died for our sins. He went to the grave and was resurrected from the dead. That is all part of the cross story.

Following His resurrection, forty days later, He ascended into heaven. We see that in Acts 1. As He was ascended into heaven, what happened from there? The Scriptures reminded us in the Old Testament and now tells us in the New Testament that He went to the right hand of the Father. He is seated there at the right hand. The right hand of a monarch in the ancient times was a place of honor. A place of authority and power. So, by saying that Jesus Christ is at the right hand of the Father, we are learning that He is at the place of authority and power and honor, and no one can sit at the right hand of God unless they are God. That is one of the things that got Jesus in trouble with the Sanhedrin when He said that very thing, that He would be at the right hand of the Father. They knew at that point that He was claiming deity and they did not like it. Now we find that after He is resurrected and ascended that He is at the right hand of the Father.

Later in Acts 7:55 it says, "But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." We find that Stephen is to be stoned to death and as he is dying the Lord allows him to have a glimpse into heaven. There he sees at that point, Jesus Christ, standing at the right hand of the Father. That is the only time that the Bible mentions Him standing at the right hand of the Father in that way. Stephen sees Him there at the right hand of the Father.

If we go to Hebrews 1:3, we find these words speaking of Christ, "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." We have another description of this sitting down at the right hand of the Father. Not only is this a position of power and authority and honor, but it is also significant to know that He sits down because His work is finished. That is what is the emphasis of the book of Hebrews. Christ came, He did a work for our redemption and when He was done and was finished with that work, there was no more cross. There was no more need for Him to be here and He sits down at the right hand of the father because as it says, He has accomplished the cleansing for our sins. That means the work is done. We find Christ has finished the work. He is at the right hand of the Father.

Going to Ephesians 2:6; this now brings us to us. We have been talking about Christ thus far and now we come to us, it says, "and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This is our blessing today. This is our treasure today. If we are Christians and we know the Lord, there is a spiritual raising of us to be seated with Christ in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus and He is seated at the right hand of the Father. There is a sense then in which we are already seated with Christ in the heavens at the right hand of the Father. We are already there in some sense. Obviously, our bodies are still here. The resurrection of the dead is yet to come. A new glorified and resurrected body awaits us. There is a spiritual sense, however, in which we already are involved with the blessings of being in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus at the right hand of the Father even right now. That kind of blows our minds if we think about it. How can I have such a privilege to be in Christ at the right hand of the Father. No one can fathom that, but it is a blessing that is ours in Christ and I trust that gives us a wonderful day in the Lord.

January 20, 2022

As we continue looking at our riches in Christ, we are coming to one that many people may not actually grasp at first. That is that we are free from the Law. The book of Romans, Galatians, and other places speak clearly about our freedom from the Law.

Romans 6:14 says, "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." There has been a shift. In the Old Testament, the Jews were under the Mosaic Law and that Law contained over six hundred laws. Included are the Ten Commandments which were central. Then you have other laws wrapped around that, some ceremonial, some civil law, some moral law. All are wrapped around those things. One of the problems with the Law was that people tried to keep it for the wrong reasons. The Law was perfect as Romans 7 tells us. It reflects the moral nature of God. It is very important for us to examine it and much of the Old Testament moral law is reiterated in the New Testament so there is not a complete break here in that sense. However, the Law itself was powerless in two major areas: The Law could not save anyone, and the Law was never intended for sanctification.

First, the Law could not save anyone. I have heard Christians today, that I think should know better, say that in the Old Testament they were saved by keeping the Law and doing the sacrifices and in the New Testament they were saved by the finished work of Christ and by faith. That is not true. No one has ever been saved by keeping the Law. Firstly, because it was never intended to save anybody. Secondly, no one has ever kept the Law perfectly except Jesus Christ Himself who kept it on our behalf. So, to be saved by the Law is an impossibility.

Second, the Law was never intended for sanctification. Sanctification means to help us grow in Christ. We can look at the moral Law and we see the reflection of the nature of God in that Law, that is very helpful. Paul says in Romans 7 that he was not able to keep that Law. The more he tried the more he realized how much he failed. That was his whole life, trying to keep the Law, he was a miserable and hopeless failure because he could not keep the Law. So, it was never intended to save us or to sanctify us.

So, as Romans 6:14 says, there has been a shift, it says, "for you are not under law but under grace." We are not saved by the Law. We are saved by grace. We don't grow by keeping the Law, we grow by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The New Testament, and Romans in particular, gets even stronger in Romans 7:4, "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God." We have died to the Law, notice that the Law did not die or go away or become eradicated. As a matter of fact, the Law still has a purpose. It shows us what sin is and our need for grace because we cannot keep the Law. He is saying here that you are no longer tethered to the Law, you died to it, but you

have now been united to Christ. Christ kept the Law and if we are united with Christ, then that Law has been fulfilled in Christ on our behalf.

Romans 7:6 gets down to the application. It says, "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter." So, we have been released. Not only have we died to the Law, but we have been released from its power and trying to make us keep the Law to be right with God, we cannot do that, so we have been released from that obligation. It goes on to say that we now "serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter." The New Testament Scriptures do not release us from moral obligations. We continue to obey the Lord. We continue to want to live righteously before the Lord, but we do so very differently from what is going on in the Old Testament. We now serve in the newness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in us and He empowers us, and we take our cues from Him and our strength from Him and not in the oldness of the letter. The Law has its place to reveal sin and to reveal sin in us, but its place is not to move us further in our spiritual life. It is the Holy Spirit that does that, and He does that on the basis of the grace of God. How blessed are we that we are New Testament Christians with the Holy Spirit in us, and we serve Him not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit.

We will finish out this week looking at one more blessing next time.

January 21, 2022

We are finishing this week looking at Philippians 3:20 today. It says, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." There is a wonderful blessing that is ours. We are citizens of heaven! That is true. All those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior are citizens of heaven. We live on earth, and there is a sense in which we are citizens of this planet as well. Most of us are citizens of America or another country. That is fine, we are part of this world, and we participate in this world, and we should be good citizens in this world. Primarily, however, we are citizens of heaven according to the spiritual blessings we have here.

Look at Philippians 3:17-18 and contrast as Paul does here. The citizenship of this earth is those who are earthbound. We will say it that way. People who do not know Christ are earthbound and we will contrast that lifestyle and that life with ours in Christ. That is what Paul does and in Philippians 3:17 it says, "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." Apparently, he was talking about some who at least proclaimed to be believers at one time. He recognizes that they are not Christians saying, "they are enemies of the cross of Christ," so they are opposed to the true gospel. They are opposed to Christ Himself and the cross.

Philippians 3:19 continues saying, "whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things." Because of their status of being enemies of the cross they are headed for eternal destruction, perhaps destruction on this planet as well as their lives often unravel, but definitely eternal destruction. Their appetites control them. They are controlled by their desires and not by the Lord. They are magnifying things that they should be ashamed of and that is how they live. Everything about their thought life is wrapped around things on this earth. You would expect that of unbelievers, what else do they have? I have often thought of those who do not know Christ and who are doing well in this life making money and going up the ladder in their career and I have often thought that if they are never going to come to the Lord, I hope they enjoy the life they have now. I should not begrudge them that because that is the best it is ever going to be for them if they do not come to Christ. For the Christian, no matter how blessed our life is here, this is the worst it is going to be! It gets better from this point on, right? So that is part of the blessing.

That takes me to Philippians 3:20-21, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." At the beginning of these verses, we see a great contrast between the earthbound people who are living for this world and for us. Our citizenship is in heaven. As we are seated with Christ in heavenly places, as we saw earlier this week, and as we are citizens of heaven, we are eagerly awaiting His return.

The next step in His prophetic program will be His coming for us and we are eagerly looking forward to that aren't we. When that happens, we look at Philippians 3:21 and see that we are looking forward to a transformation. We have a spiritual transformation at the moment of conversion. We are new creatures in Christ as 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." So, there is that spiritual transformation at the moment of conversion. Then Romans 12:1-2 speaks about being transformed by the renewing of our minds saying, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." So, we are in this constant process of being transformed to be more and more like Jesus Christ and to think more like Christ. However, there is a great transformation yet to come when He comes for us, and our bodies will be transformed into the conformity of His. Paul is raising the question of how Jesus can pull this off at the end of Philippians 3:21 when he says, "by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." How is it that we will be transformed so totally and fully and completely? It is only possible because of the power that is His and He is able to "subject all things to Himself." All things are under His control. All things bow to His will and that includes our bodies which will one day be transformed. One of the great blessings that are ours right now, one of our treasures and riches that we have now and that we look forward to is that we are citizens of heaven where Christ is, and we will one day be transformed according to the body that He will give us for all of eternity.

This should give us a wonderful weekend as we think about these things and think about the Lord and what He has done for us and our riches in Christ!

January 24, 2022

We continue in our wonderful day in the Lord broadcast and talking about the great riches we have in Christ as Christians. These treasures and blessings are things that are ours because we are Christians. All of us have these whether we are walking with the Lord as we should or not. If you are believer, the things we have been talking about for the last few weeks are privileges and blessings and treasures that are yours in Christ. This week we are looking at a few more.

We begin with 2 Corinthians 5:17 that talks about the fact we are new creations, or creatures. It can be translated either way. It says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." "Anyone in Christ," speaks of all believers. One thing this verse tells us is that at the moment of salvation we are changed into new creations. We are different. We are not simply warmed-over sinners. We are now saints. We have a new nature. We are not simply new and improved; we are new creatures. That is important because often Christianity is presented almost like a self-help faith in which if we become Christians, we can do this that or the other thing and become new people. The repercussions and outreach of our Christian walk should be that we improve our lives. That we become better people. That we are more what Christ would have us be. That is all true, but that is not the initial stage here. That is a consequence, or result, of the fact that we are new creatures in Christ. We want to appreciate what the Lord has done for us by making us new creatures.

Colossians 3:9-10 says, "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." We laid aside the old self and that is the old fleshly nature that we were before Christ. The new self is the new creature. He doesn't say *to* put it on it, he says we *have* put on. What we are looking at here is that our status, our position in Christ has changed. We are no longer what we used to be. We are now new creatures in Jesus Christ. We have that new self. We put off the old fleshly self we were before, and we are now new people in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Titus 3:5 Paul calls this regeneration or being born again. So, we are new and regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, but we also need to be renewed, and this is the problem we face as a Christian. Though we are new, we have new attitudes, dispositions, and mindsets and all that comes along with our new status in Christ, nevertheless we are still coming into this Christian life with the residue of the past. So, becoming a Christian doesn't change our personality, per se. It doesn't change the way we have thought over the years and the habits we have developed, but it begins the process of doing so because we are new in Him.

Romans 12:1-2 really comes into play here. This is a powerful and very useful verse that we turn to very often. It says, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual

service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." We are saved from this world, and we will look at that later this week, so we should no longer be acting the way we used to act and being conformed to the world system. This mind of ours, as we come into the Christian life, now has the mind of Christ according to 1 Corinthians 2. That means we have the capacity to think like Christ, have the attitudes and the values of Christ, but it needs to be renewed. So, we need the renewing of our mind so we may prove what is the will of God. What is good, pleasing, and perfect? The everyday transformation of our lives is the result of the renewing of our mind which is renewed by the Word of God that changes the way we think, our values, and our outlook on life because now as new creatures in Christ, we have these capacities to think like Christ.

This is one of the great blessings we have as a Christian. We are new creatures in Him with new opportunities and capacities and values. We are now in the process of being renewed by the renewing of our minds. I trust that gives you a wonderful day in the Lord as you think about these great truths.

January 25, 2022

Today as we look at the riches we have in Christ and the blessings that are ours, this is going to be a bit different. Looking at Hebrews 11:13 we see a different blessing. This is one you may not think of.

Hebrews 11:13-16 says, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed, if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them." It is speaking here about the Old Testament patriarchs and matriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah and so forth. Abraham and the other patriarchs are a wonderful example, on a physical level, of people who walked by faith with God in the Old Testament. Abraham in particular, left his home country and he went out to a land that God had promised him. Starting with Genesis 12 there is a repetition over and over throughout the book of Genesis of a covenant that God made with Abraham. The covenant was to Abraham that if he followed the Lord, if he came into this land and followed Him, then all that land that he will sojourn on and travel on is going to be for his descendants. Abraham believed God and by faith he was justified, and the Lord kept His promises as Abraham obeyed Him, in this regard, and the other patriarchs did the same thing. The picture here is that they never actually owned the property that they walked on. The only property that Abraham ever actually owned was a burial spot for his wife Sarah, and later on some of the other patriarchs were buried there and their wives and so forth, but they never actually owned that land themselves. Even with Isaac and Jacob, they never actually owned that land that they sojourned on, but by faith they believed it was coming. They believe that God would deliver to them that piece of real estate that He had promised to give them. As a result of that they were looking for a country that was beyond *this* country. In fact, Hebrews 11:10 says, "for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." They were looking beyond this physical real estate to something even beyond that to a heavenly city and to the eternal life that they would have with God, but they were sojourners on *this* land. They were strangers and aliens. That is what I want to speak about today.

As Christians we are exiles in a sense. We are sojourners and strangers in this land. It says in Ephesians 2:19, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household." This is a reference to the fact that we are not at home in this world. This world is kind of like Abraham leaving his old country and coming to a new and the old was left behind. So, we are strangers in a sense. Yes, we live on this planet. Yes, we are citizens of various countries, but we are strangers here. We have a higher land to go to and a better citizenship.

In 1 Peter 2:11, he picks up on this same theme saying, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." Peter uses the same picture of being strangers on this land and sojourners. We don't really belong here. We belong in a better land and place. He says that this fact of our heavenly citizenship and being foreigners in a sense on this land should reflect how we live our lives. He says to lay aside the fleshly lusts that wage war against your soul and keep your conduct excellent among the Gentiles. By Gentiles here he means unbelievers. The reason for that is so that our testimony for Christ stands out and that the world looks at us and sees that we are different in that regard. We are not tethered to the values of this planet and this world. We have a higher calling and a better place to go.

We are strangers in many ways to this land. We are sojourners. We journey here, but this land is not our settling place. We have a higher calling, a higher city that one day we will go to and be with the Lord forever. That should shape, in a magnificent way, the way we live on this planet now. I hope it does in your life. It should!

January 26, 2022

Today we are looking at our riches in Christ and some of the great blessings and privileges and treasures that the Lord has given us. We looked at a number of them throughout the last several weeks and we are looking at a couple more this week. Today we are looking at the fact that we are holy.

Do you ever think of yourself as holy? I doubt that most of us do because our definition of holiness is that of perfection. We know we have a holy God who is absolutely blameless, absolutely perfect, absolutely without sin, and so when we compare ourselves in any sense to the holiness of God, we know we fall short. As a matter of fact, that is our problem here. We know ourselves all too well and as we look into our own hearts, lives, actions and attitudes we always see blemishes. We see the evidence of sinful pollution. We know we are not holy in that sense, yet the Lord calls us to be holy because He is holy. That is an aspiration that we have as we want to move toward holiness in our lives. Even as we know we are not there yet, and we will never be in this lifetime. As a matter of fact, if we think we have become holy in our practice, we can be pretty much assured immediately that we are not holy at all and we are prideful and arrogant. So, we are dealing with a tough issue.

Yet, when we go to the New Testament Scriptures, it tells us that we are in fact holy. What does that mean? Hebrews 3:1 is just representative of numerous Scriptures, and it says, "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." He calls us "holy brethren," brethren being generic for believers. Those in the family of God. So, we are holy, and we are holy because we are "partakers of a heavenly calling." Therefore, he is describing all Christians and not just those that seem to be so saintly that they don't sin, because we know they do, but all Christians. He says all that have partaken of a heavenly calling are holy.

Let's take a look at this in Colossians 3:12-14 to learn what it means that we are holy which says, "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity." This is a statement. This is not an aspiration or command. He is not telling us to do anything here. He is describing who we are. Just as we are chosen and loved by God, so we are holy according to this passage of Scripture. It is a Scripture about being set apart for God's purposes. God chose us in Him to be holy, and because we are in Him, we have the righteousness and holiness of Christ. He then also gives us application for our lives.

We see the fruits of the Spirit in Colossians 3:12. These are the things we are to put on in the way of application because our position in Christ is holy. Colossians 3:13 addresses one of the hardest things in life to do which is to forgive people who have wronged us,

offended us, or who have hurt us, sometimes on purpose and sometimes not on purpose. It calls for us to graciously forgive them as Christ has forgiven us. That's because He took you when you were a sinner and certainly not holy and made you holy by forgiving you of your sins and making you righteous. By application, we should be forgiving others for their trespasses against us.

Colossians 3:14 tells us to put on love because it is the binding glue of life. It is that which brings about true unity among people and the people of God. We have been united with Christ. We saw that earlier as one of our positions and treasures in Him. We have been united with Him, so we are to put on love that we might, by application, be in unity with others who also know Jesus Christ.

While you don't feel holy, I'm sure, and you know all too well your imperfections and failures, the Lord has declared you holy. How we ought to praise Him for that. That should bring us great joy today as we consider this truth.

January 27, 2022

As always, we thank you for taking a little time out of your day to join us in looking at the Word of God. Hopefully this is encouraging to your own devotional life and your walk with God. We thank you for letting us be a part of that.

Today, we are continuing to look at some of our riches that we have in Christ. Last time we looked at the fact that beyond all belief, it's hard to imagine, but we are holy. We are holy because God has set us apart, and loved us, and declared us holy in Christ. We want to look at a complimentary word today. That is the word sanctified. We know the word holy, and we use the word holy even though as I indicated last time it is easy to misunderstand what that really means. The word sanctified is even more difficult because that is not a word that we use in everyday life. I can think of hardly any other context, outside of the Christian life and Scripture, that uses this word sanctify in any meaningful way. The word itself means that we are set apart. 1 Corinthians 1:2 is a good example. Corinth is probably the most difficult church in the New Testament. They had all sorts of problems, yet Paul writes to them and says, "To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours." Here we have this fact that here is a group of Christians who are really struggling in their everyday Christian life and Paul writes all sorts of stuff to them to correct them and help them change, but he still says you are sanctified in Christ. That means you have been set apart for Christ like this illustration of one of my grandchildren to explain what this means. My grandson wanted a donut. We were going to pray, and we had these donuts laid out on a box and he licked one of the donuts before we prayed to sanctify it, which meant that it was set apart for him. He didn't want anyone eating the donut he wanted, and he knew that if he licked it everyone else would leave it alone. After we got done praying, he had his donut because he had set it apart for his own purposes. On a much more profound level, we have been set apart, sanctified, by God for His holy purpose. So, the word itself simply means to set aside, or set apart, just as my grandson set apart his donut. In the biblical use, spiritually speaking, it means to be set apart for a holy purpose. So, God has set us apart for Himself for a holy purpose.

Paul is again talking to these people about some of the issues in their lives in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 which says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." First, he tells us that unbelievers will not inherit the kingdom of God. He lists off some of the sins that are not characteristic of the child of God. He says that many of them may come from that background of those that will be part of those who will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Then he says in 1 Corinthians 6:11 that these people who were once steeped in sins, whose whole lives were

characterized by sinful behavior have now been sanctified and set apart for a holy purpose. So, we are different from what we used to be. We were changed and set apart by God.

Even though 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 describes the sin of what described their lives in Corinth does not mean that a Christian cannot commit any of these sins. As long as we are in the flesh, we are capable of falling into any sin that is possible, but it is not to be characteristic of our lives. If these things are characteristic of us and this is who we are, then we have every reason to doubt whether or not we will ever inherit the kingdom of heaven or that we know Christ, because we have been set apart. The Lord has set us apart, sanctified us, justified us, and He is in the process of progressively sanctifying us into Christ likeness and that should be characteristic of all of our lives, but we cannot progressively be sanctified to Christ likeness if we have not first been set apart or sanctified as Christians.

I trust as you think about that today that you know for certain that you have been set apart by God for His holy purposes. If not, please give us a call here at Southern View Chapel sometime, and let us talk to you and explain to you how you can know that you are sanctified and justified by Jesus Christ.

January 28, 2022

We welcome you once again to our broadcast and we are talking about some of the riches we have in Christ. The last couple broadcasts have been kind of overlapping. We looked at the Lord calling us to holiness and making us holy. Not that we live holy in the sense that we are beyond sin, but we are set apart by God for holiness. Then we looked at the word sanctification which is a compatible word with holiness. It is a type of synonym meaning to be set apart for a holy purpose in the New Testament. We are going to follow up on that today and look at that same word one more time. It is such an important word and one that is easily misunderstood. That word sanctification or sanctify is who we are.

Hebrews 2:10 says, "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings." This is speaking here about Christ and His own perfection while on earth. Not that there was ever any sin in Christ, but it is speaking of a preparation for Him dying for us. Hebrews 2:11, "For both He who sanctifies and who are sanctified are all from on Father, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren." What a beautiful phrase it is at the end of Hebrews 2:11, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." The fact that we are His family is because of what *He* has done, not what *we* have done. Because of Hebrews 2:10, He has died for us, and He can now sanctify us by Himself so that we are united with Him in His family, and we are brothers with the Lord Jesus Christ in that special way. What a remarkable thought to be sanctified so that we are in the family of God!

Looking at Hebrews 10:11, it says, "Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." He is going back to the Old Testament. Under the Old Testament system God had set up this sacrificial system to cover the sins of the people, but those sacrifices could never truly take away sin. It was a covering until Christ would come and die for us. Hebrews 10:12 says, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." What the sacrifices of animals could not do Jesus Christ did at one sacrifice at the cross. When He died for us, He did what the sacrificial system could never do and that was to **remove** our sins from us. Then it says after His sacrifice for us and His resurrection He now sits down at the right hand of God and there He intercedes for us. Hebrews 10:13 says, "waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet." He is yet to come at the right time to claim His kingdom, His people, setting aside a people for Himself. Hebrews 10:14 continues, "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." Now we are back to our word sanctification. Again, as I said last time, it is not a common word for us. We don't usually use that word in other contexts. We must understand what he is saying here. His one offering perfected **for all time** those who are being sanctified.

Who is being sanctified? Those who are in Christ. Those who have been saved by His sacrifice for us. That offering has perfected for all time. There are a couple things to

understand here. The offering perfected us. Then it says we are being sanctified, "being" is present tense, something that is happening at this point. We *had* been set apart by God, that's the perfection, but we are in the process of *being prepared* for eternal life. That is called progressive sanctification. For all time, we have been perfected. That means that even though we are not perfect in this life, and though we are all in process, nevertheless, we are, for all time now and for all eternity, set apart, sanctified, made holy, and perfected by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

What a great blessing and treasure that is for us to conclude our week with as we give God praise that He has once and for all through the blood of Jesus Christ set us apart for His glory. How wonderful that is! That should lead us to worship on a regular basis. I trust it does for you.

January 31, 2022

Welcome again to our Wonderful Day in the Lord broadcast. As we start out another week, we are still on the theme of the riches we have in Christ and all the treasures that are ours in Him. This week we are going to look at several things that you might not realize are great riches, especially the first two.

The first one is the fact that you are a slave of Christ. That sounds pejorative in our world today. Slavery has a very negative connotation and rightly so. Especially from our perspective in the western world and modern times, the ugliness of slavery doesn't leave a good taste in our mouth. It is not particularly surprising that the English Bibles that we use normally translate the Greek word *doulos* in happier terms, let's say. It usually translates it as bond-servant, or just servant. Rarely do you find the Greek word *doulos* translated as slave which is its normal intent. The Legacy Standard Bible that I have been using for many of these broadcasts is a new publication put out by the Master's Seminary in California. One of the things they have done consistently in this translation is to translate the word *doulos* as slave. I think that gives us a better understanding of what is being meant here.

When we read passages, such as Romans 1:1 it says, "Paul a slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle." Paul didn't mind calling himself a slave. Neither did any of the other writers of the New Testament Scriptures. As a matter of fact, I have jotted down how many of the epistles begin with identification of being slaves of Christ: Philippians, Galatians, Romans, 2 Corinthians 4:5, Titus, James does the same thing in its opening verse, 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation 1:1. The writers of the Scriptures, virtually all the New Testament authors, identify themselves as the *doulos* or slaves of Christ. They saw no negative in that. As a matter of fact, they were very happy and proud to be called the slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am looking at Revelation 1 and we are looking at how often this shows up. We won't look at all the examples because it is found several times in Revelation, but Revelation 1:1 says, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show His slaves the things which must soon happen." The *doulos*, or the slaves, of Christ are not simply the apostles who identify themselves as such but also those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We are the slaves of Christ.

In Revelation 7:3 it says, "saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the slaves of our God on their foreheads.'" This is an example of the New Testament saints, especially the tribulation saints. They are sealed. They are called here not simply saints but slaves of the Lord Himself.

In Revelation 19:5 it says, "And a voice came from the throne, saying, 'Give praise to our God, all you His slaves, you who fear Him, the small and the great.'" It calls on us who

are the slaves of Christ to worship our Lord. The slaves do that and there is no negative in them being the slaves of Christ.

In Revelation 22:3, 6 we are in the new heavens and new earth, and we still follow this theme of being slaves of the Lord. Revelation 22:3 says, "There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him." This is talking about the eternal kingdom when we are in the New Jerusalem with the Lord. It says here that His slaves will serve Him. That will be us. Revelation 22:6 says, "And he said to me, 'These words are faithful and true'; and the Lord, the God for the spirits of the prophets sent His angel to show to His slaves the things which must soon take place." This is referencing us. He has given us, His slaves, this Revelation to understand what is going to take place.

The Lord calls us His slaves. That is not a pejorative thing. There is no negative in that. We are honored to be the very slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is balanced with the other things that we are as well but let us never forget that we are slaves of a wonderful and benevolent and gracious master. That is a wonderful thing to consider. Give that some thought today as you contemplate what we have said.

February 1, 2022

If you joined us last broadcast, you might have been surprised as we are talking about the riches and treasures and our position in Christ and how glorious those things are that we went to the issue of being a slave of Christ. The word *doulos* is the word that should be translated in the Bible as slaves. We are the slaves of Christ. We find the apostles uniformly happy to be called the slaves of Christ. The New Testament also identifies us as slaves of Christ, not only now, but in eternity to come. These are wonderful privileges that are ours.

We are looking today to another title or position that doesn't seem to be particularly inviting at first glance. We are also prisoners of the Lord. Who wants to be a prisoner? Well, if we are prisoners of the Lord, it is a very good thing.

Ephesians 3:1 says, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles." Paul was, at this point, a physical Roman prisoner, but also, he was a prisoner of Jesus. Perhaps he is speaking of both here, but he certainly is speaking of being a prisoner of Christ. He says he was happy to be a prisoner of Christ, captive by Christ, in order to benefit the Gentiles. What was it that he benefited them with? If you read through the text, he wanted them to know the mysteries of Christ. Ephesians 3:5-6 says, "which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Something took place following the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ that most Jews weren't so excited about: Gentiles were brought into the body of Christ with them. So, the Lord formed a new entity, the church, and that New Testament church would be made up not just of the Old Testament chosen people, the Jews, but also of the multitude of Gentiles that came to Christ. As time went on, the church moved from a Jewish dominance to a Gentile dominance, but always from the early church and on it was composed of Jews and Gentiles who made up the body of Christ. Paul says that is a mystery. It was not something revealed very clearly in the Old Testament, so very few people were expecting this and very few people were excited about it, but Paul was, and he was excited that he, as the prisoner of the Lord, had been sent out by his Lord to give forth this mystery that the body of Christ would be made up of Jews and Gentiles.

In Ephesians 4:1 Paul continues with this theme saying, "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." As he talks about that here, he is talking now about being a prisoner of the Lord and from that position he calls on others to be that kind of person as well and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. So, in Ephesians 3 he is talking about him being able to broadcast and proclaim the mystery of the body of Christ composed of Jews and Gentiles. In Ephesians 4 as he moves into the applicational section of this epistle he is now saying

that he is calling people to live out the live they have been called to as prisoners of the Lord among other things.

What does that look like? Paul ticks off all these different ways in which we are to walk in a worthy manner. Ephesians 4:2-3 says, "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We begin to pick up quickly in just a short number of words these great themes of how a Christian should live: humility, gentleness, patience, putting up with one another in love, being diligent to complete this unity of the faith as Jews and Gentiles come together. The Lord made that unity, and we should be maintaining that unity.

Then he says in Ephesians 2:4, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling." The body that has come together, we are to maintain that unity, but remember the one hope of our calling. The Christian life is wrapped around hope of our calling. All Christians and believers, Jew or Gentile, have one Lord and one faith and one baptism and one God. Scripture says this in Ephesians 2:5, "one Lord, one faith, on baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." All that unity is ours together in Christ. We are the prisoners in Christ who are to live out that kind of relationship with Him and live this kind of life that He outlines here.

Although to be a prisoner of Jesus Christ might at first not seem to be appealing, it is one of the most glorious things we can imagine. I hope you glory in that even today.

February 2, 2022

The last two broadcasts we have been looking at some of our positions in Christ that we normally would not gravitate toward: we are the prisoners of the Lord, and we are the slaves of the Lord. Yet, I hope that as we explained those, we saw the glory of being a slave of Christ and a prisoner of Christ and all the benefits that are involved with that.

Today we balance that out with a happier theme: we are freed from sin. We are going to look at Romans today and look at what that means.

Romans 6:1 says, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be? How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" He tells us here that we have die to sin and been set free from sin and as we think about that, that is a hard thing to swallow, isn't it? You and I know that we battle with sin. Sin has not ceased to be an issue in our lives. We struggle with it every day. Sometimes outwardly with things we say or do, sometimes inwardly with our attitudes and thoughts. We know the truth of sin. If we don't recognize the sinfulness in our lives and our gravitation toward sin, then there is something delusional about us. We know we are sinners, and we know we deal with that. When we come to the Scriptures that tell us we are dead to sin, we want to understand what that really means to us.

It says in Romans 6:5, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." So, we have died with Christ who has died for us. Just as Christ died for us, He also resurrected from the dead. If we are in Christ, there is a sense in which we have died with Christ to sin and we have been resurrected to a newness of life.

Romans 6:6 continues, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." He is saying that because we have died with Christ to sin, sin is no longer our master. Sin no longer is the one that calls the shots in our lives. Sin no longer has dibs on us. We are out from under its mastery. We are out from under its power and its dominance. We now serve a new master. It is very important that we see that. It does not mean that we are free from the temptations of sin. It does not mean that we will not sin in the future, it does mean that we no longer have to sin as we once did. We are no longer under the mastery of sin.

Romans 6:4 says, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Some of this is pretty heavy stuff and you want to meditate on it, but if we pull out of this what it says at the end of the verse, because we have died with Christ and because we have been resurrected with Christ we now "walk in newness of life." Dying to sin and dying to that power of sin enables us to live a new life. We are not what we once were. We are new creatures in Christ. We are no longer under the

mastery of sin. We are under the mastery of Christ. That gives us the privilege of walking in newness of life.

Further explaining Romans 6:6-7 which says, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." The Lord is not saying through the apostle Paul here that sin is eradicated and gone. He is not saying that. He is saying that we have died to its power. Because we have died to its power we have been justified from sin. Justified means to be made righteous. We have been legally declared righteous in the Lord. That puts us in a position now of not an eradication of sin or desire to sin, but a removal from under its dominance so that we walk in the newness of life. We are no longer under its power or slaves to sin because we have been set free and justified from sin.

So, we have been declared set free from sin. Now we are in the process of living out that newness of life that Christ has given to us. Not in perfection until the Lord comes and gives us a new body and new heart, but we are in that process of living out what God has done in us as Christians. We have been set free from sin. We have died to sin. That is a glorious truth that I trust will give you a wonderful day in the Lord.

February 3, 2022

If you were with us in the last broadcast, you know that we were talking about the fact that we died to sin and now walk in newness of life. Going back to Romans today, we are going to look at that a little more closely and the spiritual life that we now have. One of our great riches and treasures is: we are alive spiritually. Prior to salvation we were dead spiritually. Now we are alive in Christ.

Romans 6:11 says, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Earlier in this chapter he is talking about the fact that we have died to sin. That does not mean sin has been eradicated or that we don't sin. It means we are no longer under its dominance, mastery, and power. We are no longer its slave. We have died to that. Now he goes on and says that you consider yourself dead to sin but also consider yourself alive to God. So, as new creatures in Christ we have life. We have new life, and we have that new life in Christ Jesus. He tells us to consider this. This is an act of faith. When we look at our own lives, we realize we are certainly not totally dead to sin in a practical sense. We still struggle with that. We are to, by faith, believe that sin no longer need dominate our lives and that we are under the mastery of Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:12-14 says, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." Paul fleshes this out for us. First, we are to stop letting sin reign in our body. That implies that sin is still around and our task as new creatures in Christ, those who are spiritually alive in the Lord, are to not allow sin to reign in our body. Sin no longer has the privilege of being our master, but we can invite sin to come in and reign over us and that is what he is warning about here. Even though we no longer are slaves to sin, we can invite it in and allow it to have power over our lives. Second, our physical parts, eyes, mind/thinking, tongue/speech, hands/the things we do, and so forth should not be presented to sin. It no longer has any dibs in our life. Third, instead of presenting your body parts of our mind, heart, hand, and tongue as instruments of sin, present them as instruments of righteousness to God. Allow God to use those things in your life as instruments of righteousness. He starts by saying to present yourself to God. Before you present the instruments to God, the body parts to God, you present yourself to God first. This is a presentation to the Lord of choosing to present yourself and put yourself at His disposal to do with whatever He desires to do.

Romans 12:1 says, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." This passage speaks of the same thing. Present your body, your physical body and all of its parts inward and outward, as a living sacrifice to God. This is what he is calling us to do. We are now under the mastery of Christ so now we are to live that kind of life and present ourselves to Christ in that way.

Romans 12:2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." In this verse, he is saying that you are now under the mastery of Christ. Presenting yourself to Him, now you are in the process of being transformed by the renewing of your mind as the Lord changes the way you think and your attitude and your heart, primarily, through the ministry of the Word of God as the Holy Spirit uses it in our lives.

That is another great privilege that we have in the Lord.

February 4, 2022

We have been talking about a number of positions we have in Christ, and these great gifts that the Lord has given us. Those positions have included dying to sin, being made alive to Him, being the prisoner of the Lord, and being the slave of the Lord. We are switching directions just a little bit today. We are going to talk about the fact that we have been gifted by the Lord to serve Him. That is something some Christians struggle with. They don't realize that they are gifted. They don't understand where they fit in with the body of Christ and they don't know how to come alongside to minister, and often have a hard time coming along doing that. In four different New Testament books we find that we have been gifted by the Holy Spirit for ministry to other people. We find those particular passages in: Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4, and 1 Corinthians 12-14. All those passages deal with the fact that we have been gifted.

What we have in Romans 12 is a summary of these. I think it would be helpful for us to look at these gifts. It says in Romans 12:3, "For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." He starts off by calling us to humility. Don't think of yourself as higher than you ought to think. In our world, people are concerned about bad self-images. Scripture never is concerned about that, instead Scripture is always talking about pride and arrogance. So, he tells us to first humble ourselves before the Lord and not think more highly of ourselves than we should.

Romans 12:4 says, "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." He is talking about the body of Christ. There are many parts of the body of Christ. As many Christians as there are around, they are part of that body. If we are talking about a local church, which I believe he is because only in a local church can we really function in this way, then there are many members of a local church, and each has a unique position.

Romans 12:5-6 continues, "so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us," then he goes on to list some of those. Every one of us is unique. While he told us in Romans 12:3 that we are not to get arrogant and think more highly of ourselves than we should he is telling us here that we each have a part in the body of Christ, and he wants us to know that those parts come together to function as a body. The illustration that he will use later, and especially in 1 Corinthians 12, is that there is no unimportant member of the body. Some people might have more showy gifts, they might have more prominent gifts. Some might have humbler behind the scenes gifts, but all of us have been given abilities and gifts by the spirit to minister to one another in the body of Christ. Therefore, there is no unimportant part. We each function as God has chosen that we function. Then he goes on to list some of the gifts that he had in mind. We are not going

to spend a lot of time on that, but just showing how we are to use those gifts. He says in Romans 12:6-8, "each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." In all of those, what he is saying is that whatever gift the Lord has given you do it with all your might! Work it out to the fullest extent possible in your life to serve Him. If you have been given for example the gift of service, then serve! Serve mightily. If you have been given the gift of teaching, then teach and do that well. He is basically saying, don't worry about what other people are doing. Don't be distracted by their giftedness, look at what the Lord has created in your life and the gifts He has given you and the opportunities He has put before you and serve with all your might in the body of Christ.

That is a great privilege and if you don't know what your place is in the body of Christ. Let me encourage you to consider that right now and think about that this weekend. Where has the Lord gifted you and what opportunities are yours and how can you serve in the body of Christ as He designed you to serve in that body. That will give you something to think about and something that will give you great a joy as you do so.

February 7, 2022

We are going to spend another week together going through the riches of Christ. It has been such a joy going through the many ways Christ has gifted and blessed us and we are going to look at five more this week. Romans 8 tells us that we are the heirs of God. We are going to look at that blessing today.

First, when it talks about us being His children, it says in Romans 8:14, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." When it says that we are being led by the Spirit of God, it doesn't mean some mystical feeling in which the Lord leads us. He is speaking in the context of Romans 6, 7, & 8, that the Holy Spirit leads us into godliness, sanctification, and living for the Lord. If the Holy Spirit is leading us, we know that by the direction that God is taking us in our lives to become more and more like Him. If the Holy Spirit is leading us, then we have the evidence here that we are the sons of God, the children of God. That is a great blessing in and of itself, but we have already looked at that one previously.

In Romans 8:15 it says, "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" There are a couple of things here that are very insightful. First, the new spirit that we have now, that which the way the Holy Spirit leads us, doesn't lead us into slavery again. Most likely he is speaking here of the law. The law was righteous and good and perfect, but it bound us in the sense that it put a straight jacket on the lives of people, and they could not keep the law as the law was given. We are not given that kind of spirit however, instead we are given a spirit not of fear or slavery, but the spirit of adoption. So, we have the adoption. We have already discussed that blessing. The idea then, is that we have been brought into the family of God. He has chosen us to be His. We are adopted into that family, so much so, that we cry out "Abba! Father!" Many of you probably know that this is a term for father. A term of endearment. A child would call his father "Papa" or "Abba". It would be a child-like calling out to a father that a child loves and the father loves and adores that child as well. When we have this kind of spirit as the adopted sons of God, we not only have a legal situation in which we are legally, rightly the sons of God on paper, but we also have a relationship with Almighty God of such a nature that it is emotional, enjoyable, family-oriented, and we can call out to Him as our father.

That leads us to Romans 8:16 which says, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God." The Spirit testifies in the sense that the Spirit is changing us in the conformity of the image of God and to the Son and not only changing us but leading us in that direction.

Now we come to what we want to talk about, Romans 8:17 says, "and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." So, if we are children of God, the adopted sons of God,

then we are also going to inherit that which God has for us. We are the heirs of God. When we think of being an heir of someone, it is the idea that we are the family of somebody who has some wherewithal. When they pass on, they give me that which now belongs to me. I am the heir of that family. That is the picture we are being given here. We are also fellow heirs with Christ Himself so that Christ being the Son of God, there is a sense in which we are joined with Him as fellow heirs. Obviously, we are not elevated to the level of deity. We do not become a Son of God like Jesus is, He is absolutely unique, but at the same time we are now with Him in the family of God in a very unique and special way. It goes on saying, "if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him," saying that our connection with Christ, in the body of Christ, in this position of being His child, is leading us to the opportunity to glorify Him with our lives.

All of this then is a wonderful blessing that is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ.

February 8, 2022

We thank you that you would take the time to join us once again in our Wonderful Day in the Lord broadcast. We continue to look at the riches and privileges and blessings we have in our lives because we are Christ's. Today we look at a couple that go together that we would not think of ordinarily. They are found in the book of Matthew at the end part of the Beatitudes. They are found in Matthew 5:13-16.

Jesus is preaching perhaps the greatest sermon ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount, and He has already gone through the Beatitudes, "the blessed," that have occupied so much of people's attention and time, and they are beautiful and wonderful. Then He begins to top it off by going to verses 13-16 and talks about the fact that we are both salt and light in this world. That is the privilege that is ours: we are salt and light.

Starting with salt, in Matthew 5:13 it says, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." Jesus is talking to His disciples here and by extension us, and He starts out by telling us that we are the salt of the earth. So, we have to consider, and people have been talking about this forever, what exactly does He mean? What does salt do that Jesus is pointing to? Most people come up with one of two things: salt flavors and salt preserves. Both are very important. If you have ever eaten food that has no salt, you know the value of having salted meat and food. It is for taste. It gives it flavor. So, the believer brings to this world the flavor of God. The world gets to taste something of what God can do in a life because we are His. Not the full extent of what He wants to do or the perfection that will ultimately be, but the world gets to taste something of what God is doing in life through the salt that we are in this world.

On the other hand, it also preserves, so there is a very real extent in which the fact that there are believers all over the globe is a preservation of the humanity in this world, on the good side. Without the salt of the believer spread throughout all the planet, the world would be totally made-up of unbelievers. If you want to know what that looks like, read Revelation 6-19 where we see virtually everyone in that section are unbelievers and as a result of that there is very little salt on the earth at that time. When the Spirit has been removed and the believer has been removed, people will resort to what they are. So, we are able to slow that down until such time as the Lord desires.

We are also light. It says in Matthew 5:14-15, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house." We see we are the light of the world. We know in other context that Jesus Himself is the ultimate Light of the world. He has given that role to us now that He is gone. We are the lower lights you might say that point to the true Light of Christ. So, we have been given the privilege of going out and once again bringing illumination to this world of what God wants His people

to be like, what He expects, and what He desires of humanity. We get the privilege of spreading that light. It is also the light of the truth of the gospel and the believer gets that privilege.

Jesus finishes by saying in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." We are not to hide our light. Men need to see that light in our good works. In other words, our life and behavior and the things that we do is that which manifests and demonstrates that we are the light of the world, and we belong to the ultimate Light of Jesus Christ. When we do that, we will glorify our Father in heaven and therefore the goal once again is to glorify God. Our lives, as the light of this world, point to the true Light of Jesus Christ, the ultimate Light, which intends that all of that glorifies the Father Himself. That is our task and our privilege.

We are given this great blessing of being salt and light in the world that ultimately glorifies the Father Himself. That is a beautiful thing to consider. I trust you will spend some time thinking about that today.

February 9, 2022

We are going to look at a wonderful blessing the Lord has given us today that you might again not think this would be necessarily a blessing or a privilege. It is a privilege of not being under the control of the devil. Satan no longer need controls us or be in charge of our lives. We can have power and victory over Satan himself.

We begin with 1 Peter 5:8 which says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith." We know first from this passage that the devil wants to trip us up and destroy us. I think he is more interested in destroying the believer than the unbeliever because, after all, he already has the unbeliever in his camp, and he is already taking that unbeliever in the direction of hell. He wants to keep the unbeliever from seeing the greatness of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 4 tells us that he blinds the eyes of the unbeliever that they might not see the glory of Jesus Christ. So, he is actively involved in that. For the believer he is going about seeking someone to devour. He wants to trip up the Christian and destroy their lives. He wants to keep them from being fruitful and effective for the Lord. Peter says that we are to resist him. How do we fight the devil? We are to resist him.

Another passage gives us a little more on that in James 4:7 which says, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." There he goes a little further. Peter tells us to resist the devil and that is a good thing, but now James says that if you do so he will flee from you. How do we combat the power of the devil? We do so by resisting him in such a way that he basically gives up and he flees. He cannot stand before you and therefore he runs from you. So, the Scripture never talks to us in the epistles and New Testament church about doing some kind of demonic warfare, it tells us to resist the devil and he will flee from you. That is the power the Lord gives you as the Holy Spirit is within you, as He strengthens you.

There is one final passage I would like to look at in Revelation 12:9-11. This is a different context. We are in the midst of the Tribulation Period and the devil now has been thrown out of heaven. He has had access, apparently, to the heavenly realms ever since he was cast out of heaven to begin with. He no longer resides there, but he has access to the heavenly realms until the midpoint of what we call the Tribulation Period that is being described in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 12 he is now cast out of heaven, and he no longer has any access whatsoever to the heavenly places. When that happens, he is very angry, and he is very desirous of doing any harm that he can to both Israel and the children of God. We pick that up in Revelation 12:9 which says, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." So, he is kicked out and all the demonic creatures that followed him are cast out with him. We continue with Revelation 12:10, "then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority

of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night." We have a shout of joy, in a sense, that the one who has accused the believers throughout all the ages no longer has any ability to do that. We go on to Revelation 12:11, "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death." The heavens are free of Satan, but what about the people on the earth as Satan comes down here in great fury knowing that his time is limited, and he wants to do as much damage as possible? It tells us here that we need not fear even for these people because they overcame him by two means: the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their witness. The blood of the Lamb refers to the work of Christ on the cross. The crucifixion work of Christ is the means we overcome the power of the devil. The Word of their witness refers to the Word of truth here that these people also have to give them the strength and wisdom to combat the devil.

Satan is real and he is really angry, and he really wants to accuse and destroy, but we have the means by which we can resist him and defeat him through the blood of Jesus Christ and the Word of God that He has given us. That is a great blessing, and we really probably have no idea how great of a blessing it really is.

February 10, 2022

As we continue our march through the blessings and the riches and treasures that are ours in Christ, we come to John 8, and we are looking at the fact that we are free. We have looked at freedom before. We are free from the power of sin. We are free from the law. We are free from the penalty of sin, and so we have a lot of freedoms that are found in Jesus Christ. We are going to look at one that is also a freedom, but a little bit different freedom.

In John 8:31 it says, "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'" This passage is talking about those who are listening to Jesus and believing His message. He is making it clear who His true followers are. It is not those who mouth some words saying they believe and are going to go about their way. He was saying that if they remain in His Word and live it out and embrace it then they are truly His disciples, or followers. We can tell we are disciples of Christ by how we handle the Word of God, and whether we believe it and try to live it. Obviously, none of us live it perfectly, but we are truly followers in Jesus.

Then He continues saying, "and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." This is the freedom we are going to focus on for a moment. We have a freedom that is based upon truth. This truth that He is talking about must go back to probably two different things. First is the gospel. How is it that we become a true follower of Christ by understanding what Jesus has done for us on the cross? Only by knowing that truth and receiving the gospel and believing in Christ can we be set free from the penalty and the power of sin, and we are set free to follow Him. We know that truth. We have believed in and embraced that truth, and we are set free to become the children of God.

Secondly, once we are Christians, followers of Christ, the truth of His Word now trains us and teaches us how God would have us live. The more we know of that truth and the more we live it out the freer we are. Sin binds us. Sin is a bondage. Satan wants to bind us in his own steps. The truth of God's Word is the freeing mechanism. It is a means by which God sets us free from ourselves. Free from sin. Free from our natural selves so that we are able to be free in Him.

Jesus goes on and says in the following verses of John 8:34-36, "Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.'" He is saying here that there is a freedom found only in Him. That freedom is not found anywhere else. You can have a freedom from some work situation and habits and such, but you cannot have this ultimate freedom that He is talking about here unless you are set free by Christ Himself. This is a supernatural blessing. It is not something you earn or can manufacture. It is a gift. That is why I believe the truth He speaks of here is at least partly going back to the gospel itself. The

gospel offers a free gift. It is a gift given to us by Christ and we receive it on the basis of faith alone.

We have to know the truth to be set free. Religion does not do it. New habits don't do it. Self-help groups don't do it. Worldly philosophy doesn't do it, but God and His truth through the gospel and through His Word sets us free to live as God intended for us to live. I can hardly think of a greater blessing than that. That we can be set free to be what God wants us to be because of His great gift that He gives us in the gospel and in His word.

That ought to give us a wonderful day in the Lord today. I trust it does for you.

February 11, 2022

Thank you again for joining us as we complete this week of looking at the blessings that are ours in Christ. Today we are looking at the treasure of having peace with God.

Romans 5 is a wonderful passage on this subject. It talks about our peace with Him. It says in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This verse is very full, isn't it? First it talks about us being justified. We have been made righteous by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have now been set free from sin in the sense that we have been forgiven. We have been given the righteousness of Christ and that has happened by faith. It is not a work that we have done or something we have earned or something we have merited, but by faith we have received this gift of righteousness and therefore we are justified. Then it says because of that we have peace with God.

In the New Testament we find that we have the peace of God and the peace with God. The peace of God is represented in Philippians 4:6-7 which says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Here it tells us to be anxious for nothing but by prayer and supplication and so forth we can have the peace of God. In any given circumstance, between people or within our own souls, there are times when we need peace. We need peace with people and peace within ourselves. That peace of God is available when we turn our anxieties over to Him in prayer and trust and believe in Him in that way. That is the peace of God.

This passage in Romans 5 is not talking about that kind of peace. It says we have peace *with* God and that is different. The passage is teaching that we are at war with God. We are born His enemy and we are born against Him. Our great need is reconciliation, to be made friends of God and have peace with Him. It says here that we can have peace with God, but only through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, the barrier is broken down between us and God because of Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus Christ that the enmity between us and Him is gone. We were at war and now we can have peace. It says, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Romans 5:2 it says, "through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God." Again, he talks about the introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand. It is through the conduit of faith that we have received the grace of God and we stand in that in the righteousness of Christ.

He continues in Romans 5:3-4, "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope." Have you ever boasted in your difficulties? He says we can!

He is saying even in our greatest persecutions, sufferings, trials, and afflictions that we as believers do not despair because we are in His grace. We stand in that and have peace with God, and nothing can shake that peace. Nothing can remove that peace from us and our Lord.

Romans 5:5 finishes saying, "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." What a beautiful picture we are given here. We have this hope in the midst of our troubles and trials. This hope "does not disappoint because of the love of God." This love of God "has been poured out," it says, "within our hearts." What a beautiful picture and it has been done by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

To think that we were once enemies at war with God from our own desires and we have now been made friends with God. We have been reconciled to God, we have peace with God and His love has been poured out within our hearts through the giving of the Holy Spirit to us. This is a treasure that we ought to ponder often. If we don't, we are forgetting where we have come from and where we are and we are forgetting our great need of reconciliation and salvation.

To make peace with us cost the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the giving of His wonderful Holy Spirit. That is the only way that peace is possible. We are so thankful today, and as we close out this week, we are so thankful for the peace of God as one of our great blessings.

February 14, 2022

As we begin a new week in our Wonderful Day in the Lord broadcast, we are going to be focusing our attention, as we have been doing for weeks, on the riches that are ours in Christ. We have pinpointed and identified numerous blessings, riches, and treasures that are ours in Christ. These things are meant to encourage and strengthen us and help us understand who we are in Christ and our position in Him and His provisions for us. I trust you have been gaining some insight and encouragement from these discussions. I am turning our attention today to the issue of our security in Christ. That is not just a minor thing. As a pastor these questions come up regularly among people. How do I know for sure that I am secure in Christ? How do I know that even if I am a Christian now, I will not lose my salvation somewhere down the line or that I won't do some sinful behavior that would cause me to lose my salvation or that I might come under the attack of the devil that might shake my faith? How do I know that I will persevere to the end and if I am a Christian now that I will ultimately be with the Lord in glory? A lot of Christians struggle deeply with their spiritual development because they have not resolved these questions.

I'd like to focus our attention on Romans 8 this week. I think this is one of the key passages, one of the most important passages in all the Bible on this particular subject because we are not looking at some proof texts here or there, but we are looking at a section that is actually dealing with that subject plus it is capsulizing all that is being said in the book of Romans, in many ways, all the way back to Romans 5 which has been dealing to some degree with this issue of our position in Christ, our salvation and now the security of our salvation.

We pick it up with one of the most beloved verses in Scripture which is Romans 8:28. People have turned to this verse time and time again when they are confused, hurting, or grieving. It says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Many, many Christians have come to this verse of Scripture, grabbed it, somewhat out of context and it has brought them comfort, strength and security, but they skip out on the rest of what Paul is saying here. This verse standing alone is wonderful. I do not want to depreciate it in any way. This verse is needed in our lives, so let's focus on this for just a moment. "For those that love the Lord," is an identification of a Christian. Our Sovereign God is orchestrating all things for our good. If we know Him, love Him, and we are a child of God, then He is at work in all circumstances of our lives and that is so encouraging when we face the difficulties of life on a regular basis. It is encouraging to know that a Sovereign God is in charge of even those things that disappoint us greatly, like the things we have done, things others have done, and the world around us, and to know that He is orchestrating all of these things for our good. He is not saying that everything that comes into our life is good in the moment of time or that everything is just wonderful. Paul is saying that He is working all of these things together for our ultimate gain. What that "good" is we usually think is something superficial or momentary. This is why we have to

press on to the other verses, because the apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit takes it much further.

Romans 8:29 says, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." What is the good that the Lord is at work doing in our lives? No matter what comes our way, good things, bad things, tough things, or happy things, He is orchestrating and working all of these things together for our good. What is that good? Romans 8:29 just told us, "to become conformed to the image of His Son," that is, to become more and more like Jesus Christ. So, whatever the Lord is bringing to our lives is not to destroy us. Certainly, it is not to cause us to fall out of faith or to be removed from the family of God. He is going to talk about that as he goes further. Not at all. Instead, all these things are coming together to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

That is a beautiful picture as He matures us in Him. We are going to move on to the rest of this passage of Scripture and look at the context and how it gives us security in Christ. We hope you will join us as we persevere through this passage.

February 15, 2022

Last time we looked at Romans 8:28-29 and we saw that the Lord is working all things together for our good. The good that He identifies in Romans 8:29 is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. God is working all these things in our lives in order that we might mature in our spiritual development so that we might become more like His Son. He has mentioned in Romans 8:29 the word "predestined" which scares a lot of people. It really shouldn't. If we believe in a Sovereign God, we realize He is in charge of all things. It says that He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. Then in Romans 8:30 we pick that back up and it goes on to talk more about our security in Christ.

Romans 8:30 says, "and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." So, the predestined whom He has called to himself are also justified. Notice that there is no break here. Everyone who has been predestined has been justified. Now theologically, that means we have been made righteous, our sins have been forgiven and we have been given the righteousness of God and now we are in favor with God. It is a legal term speaking of our standing with God. All those whom He has called have been justified. There is no break. Those whom He justified He also glorified, no break. So, if we have been justified by Christ, then we will also be glorified with Him. This is even speaking as if it is a done deal, so even though this glorification, our ultimate glorification, will be in eternity when we go to be with the Lord, He speaks of it as if it is already a done deal. He has predestined these people, He called them, He justified them, and He glorified them. These people are His people, and nothing breaks that chain. Some have called this the Golden Chain of Redemption because here we have this chain of redemption. So, we know that if we have been set aside by Him and called and justified, then we will be glorified! There is nothing that can take that away. He is going to develop that argument more fully, but we have been taken this far right now.



Romans 8:31 begins to develop and unravel this, it says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" He is beginning to anticipate arguments. Someone might come along and say this is all well and good, but isn't there a possibility that someone or something, perhaps the devil or my own self, could come along and unravel all that God has done even though God is a Sovereign God and even though the Lord is in charge of all these things and has made these promises, maybe God's plan can be derailed? If we want someone on our side, who better than God? It doesn't matter if you have the dream team basketball team of all the best players who have ever played, if God is on your team, we are never going to lose right? Something far more important than a basketball game is at stake here. What is being said is that there is nothing, no amount of people or temptation or conflict that can overwhelm our side because our side has God on it.

Then it says, in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" He presses on with his argument and he wants to completely blow away any argument or debate against this view that he is giving. He says, not only is God for us, but think about this: He did not spare His only Son at all but delivered Him up for us. Think about that! The very best thing God could ever give for you and me is His Son who would come to deliver us from sin. God has already delivered over His Son. God has already given His Son. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that we would not perish but have everlasting life. Paul is saying that if the Lord has already done that on our behalf, how will He not also with it graciously give us all things. So, in other words, if He has given us the best, why wouldn't He give us the rest? If He sent His Son to die for us, then why

would we be concerned that we would not also be brought together with the Son into eternal life. He has given us the best, certainly He is going to give us the rest.

That is a great blessing, isn't it? That should give us great encouragement in our walk with the Lord today. Paul is not done yet. He continues this argument to the end of the chapter. We will continue this next time!

February 16, 2022

This week we are looking at one of the great treasures that is ours in Christ and that is that we are secure in Him. We are eternally secure. Nothing can shake us from the love of Christ. Those are wonderful things to consider.

Paul is building here one of the most comprehensive arguments found in the Scriptures to show us our security. We have already looked at two different sections in Romans 8:28-29 that He is working all things together for our good and our good is conformity to Christ. Then we have seen in Romans 8:30-31 that those He has predestined, he has called, and those he has called he has justified and those that he has justified he has glorified. Those are staked on the fact that the Lord has already given us the greatest of all possible gifts, that is His Son, so, why would He not give us everything? He has given us the Son, why not continue to give us the life that is found in the Son. This is Paul's argument: because God has given the Son, He will definitely give us the life.

Now we move on where Paul still seems to be arguing with an invisible antagonist here who is questioning what Paul might be teaching and may be asking, what if you are saved now but you mess up badly or something shakes your faith, and you lose your salvation? So, Paul continues his argument against this antagonist in Romans 8:33 which says, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" Now he has this idea of someone making a charge, or maybe in a courtroom scene. So, we are on trial here and someone comes forth and brings a charge against us. Basically, the charge is this: this person does not deserve eternal life. This person is not one that God should keep for His own. There has been a legal charge brought against us.

Romans 8:33 continues, "God is the one who justifies." On the bench is God. God is not one who is going to be deceived by a very deceptive and well-scheming prosecutor or lawyer. He is not shaken by great arguments. He justifies. His justice is always right. Throughout the Scriptures one of the great teachings, we find throughout the whole Bible is that our Lord is no respecter of persons, His judgment is always right, He never takes anything from some other viewpoint that is not right. He knows what is right and He justifies. God is the One that justifies, so don't get worried about what somebody else might say.

Romans 8:34 says, "who is the one who condemns?" Who is going to stand up in the face of God and condemn one that He has already delivered? One that He has already justified, already glorified, already sent His Son to die for. Who is this one that is going to stand up and condemn you, the believer?

Romans 8:34 continues saying, "Christ Jesus is He who died, yes rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God who also intercedes for us." He is falling back on the gospel and saying that no one has the right or power to condemn us because Jesus Christ died in our place. He took our sins upon Himself and therefore when He was raised from

the dead, He had God's stamp of approval on Him for all that He had done. As a matter of fact, going back to Romans 8:1 it says, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." So, no one can condemn anyone in Christ Jesus because of what Christ has done for us. If dying on the cross for our sins was not enough. If resurrection from the dead is not enough, then we press on. Romans 8:34 says that after the resurrection and ascension our Savior is now at the right hand of God. The right hand of a monarch was a position of power. He is at the right hand of God in power and authority and that is where Jesus resides. Romans 8:34 also tells us, "God who also intercedes for us." The Lord is praying for us in that sense. He is interceding for us so that nothing can get through Him to the Father. He intercedes for us. He cuts off any accusation, any condemnation of any sort against us because Jesus Christ Himself is interceding for us. What a barrier we have there. Nothing can penetrate that barrier. We should not be shaken in our faith.

Paul is not yet done, and we will look further at our security in Christ tomorrow.

February 17, 2022

I'm glad you could join us again today. We are spending this whole week looking at one of the great treasures we have in Christ and that is our security in Him. Wouldn't it be a tragedy if somehow, we could come to Christ and be redeemed and justified by Him and given all the promises that we have looked at over the last several weeks and then somehow lose it all and lose our place and position in Christ? That would be the greatest tragedy of all tragedies.

In Romans 8 Paul is building an airtight argument saying that that cannot happen to the child of God and that nothing can separate us from His love or rob us of our salvation.

We have looked at Romans 8:28-29 and found that we, as His children, have all things working together for our good. That good being that we be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. He has called us, justified us, and glorified us in Romans 8:30. We also know that no one can bring a condemnation against the elect of God as Paul tells in Romans 8:34 asking who can condemn us? No one can condemn us!

We are now looking at Romans 8:35, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" There's the big issue. Can someone or something separate us from the love of Christ? Here we have His love, and we are His, and He is working all things according to His will for our good, but can something come along and separate us from that love? He begins to talk about the possibilities and the possible enemies that could come along and separate us. He continues in Romans 8:35 saying, "Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Notice, before we read the next verse, that Paul is talking about all sorts of possible struggles, turmoil, and difficulties in life. The most terrible things you can think of; can they separate us from the love of Christ?

Then Paul quotes from the Old Testament in Romans 8:36 saying, "Just as it is written, 'For your sake we are being put to death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'" So, it is possible that the child of God can undergo tremendous persecution. We could even be slaughtered, as it says here. We could be put to death all day long for the cause of Christ. That has happened to many of our brothers and sisters throughout church history, and it is happening right now in many parts of the world. Here in America, that is very rare, but one day it may not be rare, so the Lord is not promising us physical safety at this point. He is not saying that we could not be persecuted or even martyred for the cause of Christ, we very well might be!

He goes on saying in Romans 8:37, "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us." So, what happens if persecution comes along? In the last two years with the pandemic issue in America and around the world, the unrest in the social realm, all these people stepping up saying this that and the other, there has been a lot of unrest in our country and around the world. All of these things have popped up

and many people are unsettled, but what a verse of Scripture this is. In all of these things we overwhelmingly conquer. He is not saying we will not face the persecutions and struggles of life that everybody faces. He is not saying we will always conquer physically. He is saying we will conquer spiritually through Him who loved us. Our victory is always secure in Christ. It doesn't say simply that we conquer and are victorious, it says "we overwhelmingly conquer." Over and above! Remember Romans 8:28 which says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God." Then we come back to Romans 8:37 which says, "we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us." 1 John 4:19 tells us, "We love, because He first loved us." Our love is predicated upon the love of Christ. Why is our salvation secure? Because we conquer through Him who loved us first, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't think it can get any better than that and when we come to a place where we might struggle or even doubt our salvation, what a passage of Scripture to turn to and know that we are secure in Christ not because of our own efforts or abilities or holiness, but because of Him who overwhelmingly conquers all things for us in Him because He loves us. What a joyful thing to consider.

February 18, 2022

I hope you have been enjoying our time together this week as we look at our security in Christ, the great blessing that is ours in Him. We have been focusing on Romans 8 as we have looked at this passage that unpacks all of this in a very comprehensive way. We have worked our way through to the last two verses of Romans 8. We will finish off here because Paul finishes off there as well. As he does so, he has already talked about all these various ways in which we are secure in Christ. Now, nothing can separate us from the love of God. We overwhelmingly conquer, through the love of Christ. The Lord has come and delivered us from sin. No one can condemn us because God is judge and Christ has come to take our sin. All of these things are there.

Now, I guess the invisible antagonist that Paul has been dealing with is trying to find some loophole in this argument. In Romans 8:38-39, I like to say, Paul pulls out all the stops. Remember the old pipe organs? They had all these stops. Dozens of them. If you pulled out all the stops these organs could almost blow off the roof. That is what Paul is doing here. He is pulling out all the stops and kind of blowing the roof off. He comes up with every conceivable concept and enemy or antagonist that could possibly separate us from the love of Christ and basically says, no it can't.

Romans 8:38-39 says, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul has already talked about a number of potential antagonists back in Romans 8:35. He comes up with more this time. He talks about death. Can death separate us? Can life? Can angels? Now we are moving to spirit beings. Probably here speaking of demonic angels, but even if these are good angels the next ones are not, and he speaks of rulers and so forth. I believe he is speaking of demonic creatures when he says angels. Could the devil come along and rob us of our salvation? No, not according to Paul. The term powers almost always in this context refers to demonic creatures. If the demonic creatures can't do it, what else? This is where Paul throws the kitchen sink at it. Nothing ever created will be able to separate us from the love of God, he says. ***Nothing ever created.*** So, what is it that could separate us from the love of Christ if you already know Him as your Savior? What could that possibly be? Nothing ever created could do that. The argument I have heard most frequently against this view is that none of these things can separate me from the love of Christ, not the demons or the angels, nothing, but maybe I can separate myself. Maybe I can jump out of His love. Maybe I can resist and turn and deny the faith and fall out of His love. Maybe I personally could sin so deeply that the Lord takes away my salvation. If that is your thinking and what you have heard, let's go back to our verse of Scripture here where it says, "nor any other created thing." Let me ask you, are you created? Did you create yourself? No, you were created, and you were created by God. So, when he says nothing ever created can separate you, he means you as well.

The point is that your salvation is not secure because of you, it is secure because of Him, because Jesus Christ has done everything necessary for your salvation and your eternal security in the Lord Jesus, and it says that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. All of this is in Christ. **All of it!** So, as long as you are in Christ, then you are in His love, and nothing could ever separate you from His love. The whole point from Romans 28-39 is that as a child of God you are in Christ, and He is working everything for your good and your growth in Him to become more and more like Jesus Christ.

So, all week we have been looking at this great treasure of our security in Christ. It is one of the great blessings of our salvation. I hope this deepens your faith, trust, and love of the Lord.

February 21, 2022

For several weeks we have been looking at the wonderful riches we have in Christ, and we have gone through well over thirty of them so far. I want to look at five more this week as we kind of wrap all of this up. If you were asked what you consider to be some of the greatest gifts that the Lord has ever given you beyond your salvation, what would you pinpoint?

One of those would probably be the Scriptures. As we think about what we have in our hands and what we can read. The teaching that is there. The instruction about God. The understanding we can have about the Christian life are all found in the infallible and inspired Word of God. It is a great gift and treasure.

When we come to the book of 2 Timothy, Paul is writing his final letter to anyone. He is writing this to his friend, and the one to whom he has served many years as a leader and mentor, Timothy.

As he writes to him in 2 Timothy, he talks about a great treasure. 2 Timothy 1:13-14 says, "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." We look at the word "treasure" and we see that he has given him a treasure. What is that treasure that is his? It could be the gospel. It could be salvation, and Paul has been talking about that, but in the immediate context, at least part of it must be the Word of God.

In 2 Timothy 1:13 Paul says to, "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me." These sound "Words" would be the inspired teachings that Paul was handing down to Timothy and others and that found their way ultimately in the Scriptures. As he says that to Timothy there seems to be a concern that Timothy was not holding as tenaciously as he should to the sound words that were being handed down. So, he tells him to hold to that and he also tells him to guard it because the Scriptures are always under attack from the outside, and sometimes from the inside. So, if Satan can undermine the truth of God's Word, and the thinking of people, then he has won a great victory. So, Paul tells Timothy he needs to guard that treasure that has been handed down.

Looking at 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul says, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Again, he is talking about this great treasure that is ours, the Word of God. Paul says to Timothy that he has been taught by Christ Himself, he has been inspired by the Holy Spirit to teach certain things. Paul knows he has shelf-life like all of us, none of us are going to be here forever, and that he needed to pass down this information, this message, and these truths, to other men who were faithful to the Lord. Some of those included people like Timothy and Titus.

He writes to Timothy and says he is handing these things down to him. He tells him this treasure of the truth of God's Word he is giving to him, and he tells Timothy he wants him to hand it down to other people as well. Unless it is continually handed down it fades totally off the scene. He tells him not to look just for people who want to hear the message, that is good, but he wants him to also identify some men, perhaps some women, who not only want to hear the message, but who want to pass it on to other people as well. So, other faithful people. This becomes the paradigm for Christian discipleship, and it is done through the Word.

We have a message from God that the Lord has inspired other people to give to us and it is now in the Scriptures. That message was handed down first, orally, to Timothy and others and the church of that time, and now as Paul writes his very last epistle. He is calling on Timothy to hold fast to that truth and guard that truth and pass it down to others who are faithful to pass it down as well. This is the treasure we have, the Word of God, and we have the great and infinite privilege of not only believing it and embracing it but handing it down to other people that they too can guard that great treasure, hold fast to it, and live by it.

So, the Word of God, the Scriptures, are one of the great gifts that God has given us. One of our great riches in Christ. I hope you appreciate them. I hope you read them, and I hope you love them. Have a wonderful day in the Lord.

February 22, 2022

Thank you for joining us today in our Wonderful Day in the Lord broadcast. If you were with us last time, we were looking at another one of our rich treasures that God has given us as believers: His Word. We would not know anything about God or life or eternity or so many things if it wasn't for the precious Word of God that has been given to us.

I am going to look at another gift today. Another richness that we have in Christ: grace.

We talk a lot about grace today. The most popular Christian song in the world right now is "Amazing Grace." It is not always popular for the right reasons. A lot of unbelievers sing it. It has a beautiful terminology and tune, but a lot of people sing it because what they want is grace, even amid their sins, even if they don't want to turn to Christ, they would love to have grace. Sometimes it is abused, but we find that the Scriptures are simply filled with grace and that without grace you and I are hopelessly and eternally lost in our sins. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation, or to merit the gifts of God. Those are given to us as free gifts from Him. So, grace is a precious, precious gift that God has given to us. There is probably no Scripture better known regarding grace than Ephesians 2:8-9.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works so that no one may boast." This encapsulates the message of the gospel as far as the reception is concerned. He has spoken earlier about what the gospel message is: that Jesus Christ has died for our sins, He resurrected in power and ascended into heaven and that He calls us to Himself to receive His gift of salvation by faith alone. That is what Paul is talking about now, the reception of the good news, the reception of the gospel. So, it has been given to us, it says here, by grace. It is received by us totally by faith. We don't do anything to earn it, we reach out and take it because it is a gift from God. That is why He follows up that word grace with the word gift. It is a very similar terminology. It is the same basic idea, but the redundancy is helpful because the grace that saves us comes from a gift that comes from God Himself. He follows that up by clearly saying that it is not of works so that no one may boast. I'm glad he threw that in there because it makes it crystal clear that there is nothing that we do to earn the grace of God or that we can earn the free gift of salvation. It is given to us totally by grace. So, grace is one of those special treasures, riches, that are ours. We enter the Christian faith by grace. We live the Christian faith by grace. We will go to heaven as believers simply and purely because of grace.

2 Peter 3:18 tells us that we grow by grace. As Peter begins to close his second epistle, he only wrote two, he closes this one with these words, "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." How do you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? Grace is a gift. How do you grow in that gift? If grace means favor, unmerited

favor, then how are we to grow in that? I think what he has to say here, as he couples that word grace with the word knowledge, is that we are growing in a sphere of grace. We are growing in that atmosphere, that sphere, that we are bathed in grace. We also grow in the knowledge of that grace. It is our privilege to spend our lives fleshing out what it means to grow in grace. Fleshing out what it means to have the grace of God for ourselves because that is something that we don't really expect from God. It is not something that we take for granted. It is something I think we continually learn and appreciate more and more. We grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, one of our wonderful riches in Christ is grace. It is the initial gift, in many ways, as God gives us His grace that brings us into His family, and we grow in that grace, and we live in that grace, and we will spend all of eternity with Him in heaven because of that grace.

That ought to give you a wonderful day in the Lord. I hope you enjoy thinking about it.

February 23, 2022

Once again, we are looking at several gifts and privileges and riches that the Lord has given us as Christians. One of those that is just so precious to us is fellowship. Fellowship with God and fellowship with those who are part of God's family as well.

1 John 1 talks about that fellowship. It says in 1 John 1:3, "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." We look here at the fellowship. First, fellowship means communion. So, we have this communion, this commonness. First, we have fellowship with God because we are in His family because we are saved by His grace, as we saw last time. We have communion and are coupled with Him. We are one with Him in that spiritual sense. So, we have true fellowship with Him. *Koinonia* is the Greek word for fellowship. Because we have that kind of fellowship with Him, we have that kind of fellowship with those that belong to Him. So, John is saying that we have fellowship with each other because we have fellowship with Christ. Our commonness is found and centered around Christ. We come together around Jesus Christ. That is what we have in common. So, we fellowship because we know Christ as our Savior with others who know Christ as their Savior.

In 1 John 1:5 it speaks of this fellowship, this commonness, with Christ as producing something in our lives. It is not simply a legal document. It is not just something that is true, it is something that brings about a change of life. So, John immediately starts talking about that in 1 John 1:5, "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." First, he describes God as Light. No darkness. He is using these metaphors, pictures, concerning the fact that the Lord is pure. He is without sin and there is no evilness, and no sinfulness in Him. So, that is God.

In 1 John 1:6 it says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." Notice that terminology of "if we say," he uses that term several times early on in his book. He is calling out some people here perhaps who are making proclamation that they are Christians. People that say they belong to God and have a fellowship with Christ, but their life does not witness to that. It does not demonstrate that because they are actually walking in darkness. They claim they are in fellowship with the One who is Light and therefore they have that commonness with Him, yet their life does not evidence that and instead they are walking in darkness. He says that cannot be true.

1 John 1:7 goes on saying, "but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." You see he moves the other direction now. For those that claim they are in fellowship with Christ but walk in darkness he says that cannot be. There is a disconnect here. You better look closer at your life because what you say and what you profess does not jive

with what is true as we see in your life. On the other hand, if you are walking in the Light, and he is not talking about perfection, but if we are coupled with the One and fellowshiping with the One who is Light, then our lives should demonstrate something of that Light because He Himself is the Light. If so, we have fellowship not only with the One who is Light, but we also have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. He is saying that when we come to the Lord, who is Light, His blood has cleansed us from sins. We are pure, we are holy in the sight of God. That gives us the privilege of being in fellowship with God.

That fellowship should produce somewhat of a Godlikeness, Christlikeness, a change in us. Then as that produces that in our lives, we then are in communion and fellowship with others who are likeminded who also have the same kind of fellowship with God and that produces a very sweet, sweet thing that we can have communion with God, with Christ, and with other people that love Him like we do. Don't ever take that for granted. It is one of the privileges that are ours in the Lord Jesus Christ.

February 24, 2022

We thank you for joining us again today. We are looking at some of the great treasures and riches that are ours in Christ. Last time we looked at fellowship in 1 John 1. I am going to look at 1 John again and look at something else today. Fellowship is there, and so is joy. That is our richness today: joy. One of our privileges is to have joy in Christ.

1 John 1:3-4 says, "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete." Not only do we have this fellowship with God, with Christ, and with one another that we saw last time, but he also says that as we have this fellowship, as we live this way, John says that our joy will be made complete. Now, this passage, in all reality, could be translated one of two ways.

John could be saying that his own personal joy is complete because of the way these people are living their lives and the fellowship he can have with them, or he could also be saying that our joy, our personal joy, is made complete because of our fellowship with Christ and walking and living in the Light. Either way we go there, it is pretty good stuff. We can have joy in Him. So, joy is one of those privileges and riches we have in Christ.

When we think of joy we often think of Philippians as the book of joy. The words joy and rejoicing are found numerous times in Philippians. I want to look at a few verses and see where joy can be found. We must distinguish at this point between joy and what most people would consider happiness. Happiness is more of an external thing. It is something we have when the circumstances are all lined up just right, when good things are happening, and we have this happy spirit. Joy is a deeper, more intense thing that can be with us even in times of trial, sorrow, heartache, and grief because there is an intense settled position of joy within us as Christians. So, it is not so much an outward exuberance or emotion, it is a settled position in Christ. So, as Christians, no matter what our situation in life, we can know joy. Paul writes this particular book from a prison. So, his circumstances are not the best and he talks often about joy and the need for joy.

In Philippians 1:18 it says, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice." He says here that he is in prison and there are people out there in the free world who are proclaiming Christ, preaching the gospel he said, partly it seems like to cause Paul more difficulty, we are not sure of all the details there, but Paul says he doesn't care. If the gospel is being proclaimed, he rejoices. So, he has joy in the proclamation of the gospel and the proclamation of Christ whether he does it or someone else does it.

In Philippians 2:2 it says, "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." This church seemed to have one problem, not a lot of problems compared to other churches in the New Testament, but it

seemed to have a problem with conflict and lack of unity. So, Paul on several occasions goes after that theme of unity. He says to them that if they were to unite their thinking and their purposes and attitudes then his joy would be fulfilled. So, we have joy and unity in the body of Christ. When brothers and sisters, who sometimes don't agree on particulars whether they are doctrines or convictions or whatever, can unite around the purposes of Christ and have the attitude of humility that Christ presents here, he says then we can have joy

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In Philippians 4:4 he says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" In Philippians 4:10 he says, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity." We have here a rejoicing in the Lord.

We cap this off today with this...our joy principally is in the Lord. Whatever our circumstances in life might be at the moment we can have joy in the Lord because we know He is ours. He is in us. We are in Him. Our ultimate destiny is to be with Him. He controls all things, and we can trust Him in that. So, ultimately, we are people whose lives should be typified by the joy that the world cannot understand because our joy, our rejoicing, is in the Lord.

So, you rejoice in the Lord with me today as we think about these things.

February 25, 2022

For many weeks now we have been looking at our riches in Christ during our Wonderful Day in the Lord broadcast. This is our position in Christ. These are the things that all Christians have been given and we can glory in these things. These are not normally things that the Lord tells us that we have to do, but these are things that He has done for us. So, we have been looking at one after the other, thirty some of these. Today is going to be our final one and it is one of the great ones. It is one of the ones that we rejoice in so much and that is: the love of Christ. We have His love.

We start today with a command in the gospel of John and then later in the epistle 1 John. In John 13:34-35 says this, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." I just got through saying that we have been looking at the things the Lord has done for us, and we will look more closely at that in a moment. We start with this. He is giving a new command to His apostles that they love one another as He has loved them. To love one another is not a new command. We find that in the Old Testament. We find it throughout Scripture, but Jesus said there is something new about this command that I am giving you. That is that you love one another as I have loved you. That is the newness of this command, I think. No one has ever loved like Jesus has loved. He came to this earth because He loved us. He died for people that hated Him. He saved us when we were still His enemies. No one has ever loved like Jesus. He is the epitome, the perfect example of love. He is saying to His disciples that He has loved them this way and that is our privilege, that is our treasure that we are looking at today. He has loved us with a pure and perfect love. He then sends us out to duplicate that love in others. Obviously knowing that none of us can reach that standard. None of us will ever love others like He loved us, but nevertheless, that is our standard and He has called us to love one another in that way.

Then I think of 1 John 3:16 which says, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." I'm going back now to His example and not only His example, but His action. We know love, this is how we really know love, we know love that He demonstrated that love in dying for us and laying down His life for us. Then He again calls us to lay down our life for others. So, very similar to what Jesus had told us in John 13, He is saying this love that is given us by Christ, demonstrated and the example, is now to be duplicated by us in the way we love other people.

He says in 1 John 4:19, "We love, because He first loved us." I think that is a very important verse of Scripture. Why is it that we can love, even to a minimal degree like Christ loved us? Only because He first loved us. This verse doesn't just tell us that we are to love others, but to think about the love that we have for Him. Why is it that we love Christ? If you are a Christian, I assume you love Christ. I think that is part of the definition. If you love Jesus Christ, you love Jesus Christ because He first loved you. You didn't start

it. You were not the initiator. You didn't go out to love Him and hope He loved you back. Instead, it was exactly the opposite. Jesus Christ loved you first. He made the first move. That was not simply in words. It wasn't in sentiment. It was in action. His love led Him to the cross where He died for you, and for me. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

So, His love starts with Him and is given to us that we might in turn love Him and love others.

This is the final example of the privileges and riches that we are going to talk about at this time. I hope it is a great one for you. I hope this whole series has helped you to have a wonderful time in the Lord Jesus Christ.